

Apocalyptical HISTORY;

OR, A

FAIR STATE

AND

CHRONOLOGICAL CONNEXION

Of the several Events, referred to in the

Book of REVELATION;

With a View to evince;

That, according to St. John, the grand Event of *our* Times is nothing less, than the further *Downfal* of Popery, in the Reduction of the *Apostolic* House of Austria, to a total Incapacity of opposing, the subsequent successful *Ir-ruption* of the Turks and their Associates, into the several Kingdoms and States, professing Obedience to the Decrees and Ordinances of the See of Rome.

PART the FIRST.

By THEODORE DELAFAYE, A. M.
RECTOR of the united Parishes of St. *Mildred's*
and *All-Saints*, in the City of CANTERBURY.

Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his Secret unto his Servants the Prophets.

AMOS iii. 6, 7.

L O N D O N:

Printed for S. and E. BALLARD, at the *Blue-Ball*,
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Apocryphical HISTORY

O. S. A.

FAIR STATE

A. N. D.

THE ENOCHIAN CONNECTION

Of the several Elements, treated in the

Book of REVELATION

With a View to explain

That, according to St. John, the great Event
our Times is waiting for, than the former
Dreadful of Popery, in the Destruction of the
apostolic House of Austria, to a total Inter-
city of opposing, the Independent interest, the
region of the Turks and their Associates, the
the several Kingdoms and States, protesting
obedience to the Decrees and Ordinances of
the See of Rome.

PART the FIRST

BY THEODORE DELARAYE, A. M.

Author of several Treatises of 8000 Lines
and more in the City of Geneva.

Printed at Geneva in the City of Geneva
by the Author, and the several Editions
of the first and second Editions, and the third
Edition, in the City of Geneva.

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APOCALYPTICAL HISTORY;

OR, A

FAIR STATE, &c.

AS the further downfal of Popery in the total ruin of the House of Austria, and the subsequent successful ravages of the Turks, is not pretended to make the subject matter of more than of one, and the last but one of St. John's Prophecies only; it may therefore be thought, that a clear explication of that single Prophecy, with a due state of what is apprehended to be it's correspondent event, had been sufficient for the purpose of this Essay. Yet, if it should prove true, that St. John has delivered his Predictions in a close connected chain, which, in it's proper position, will appear to extend from his own times down to ours, and somewhat further; it may be declared, neither a consistent treatment of these Prophecies, nor indeed a method likely to evince the justness of the most plausible application, to proceed in the least article, that concerns them, without due regard to this pre-established connexion; considering, how easy it is to produce historical Incidents so nearly similar to each other, as to render it very difficult to determine with certainty, on the foot of correspondence only, which of them should be preferr'd.

Was it requisite, many instances might be recited out of the several comments on the book of Revelation, in which, for want of attending to the above stated criterion, much contention, as might well be expected, and not one line of solid truth has been produced. But, as it is not intended to mispend any part of our time in the disagreeable

task of contradiction, nor to deal here in any thing, but bare matters of fact, without partiality to any hypothesis, other than St. John himself leads the way to; it becomes more suitable to remark in this place, that the connection, on which the following attempt founds no small part of it's merit and usefulness, is not, what some, too boldly and much to their discredit, have asserted it to be, a meer chimera and unsupported assertion, but a point as undoubted as any ever maintain'd, since it offers itself to our view most clearly, in St. John's own arrangement of the several Prophecies he favours us with.

Most certainly no one will venture to maintain, that the six first Prophecies, delivered at the opening of the six Seals in the sixth Chapter, are unconnected, or not in sequence; numerically distinguished, as they appear, and related, as they are, in due succession, the one to the other. And as to the following Predictions of the trumpets and vials, about these likewise, it should seem, not the least doubt could be entertained in this respect, since St. John (viii. 1.) most expressly includes them all within the period of the seventh seal, and places the seven vials (x. 7. xi. 15.) within that of the seventh trumpet; plainly hereby intimating to us, not only that these three several Classes of Prophecies are connected with and subsequent to each other, but that, together, they make up one continued series, which, after being divided into two general parts (the first of which contains the six seals, and the last the seventh) should in the latter branch of this division, which concerns the seventh seal, be subdivided again into two others, that, namely, of the trumpets, and that of the vials. But whether the Prophecies related between and distinct from the three Classes, are also to be consider'd as laid in order of time and belonging to the chain, this

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perhaps may seem the more doubtful, as some very great men have thought it so. And yet one would be apt to believe, even this particular could not create much suspence, as St. John very plainly affixes the Predictions of this kind to a settled period; either by subjoining them immediately to the concluding article of the Class that precedes them, and in such case not mentioning the period of the succeeding Class till after the recital of these intermediate incidents, as in Chapter the seventh and the eleventh; or else by placing them within and at the head of the Period, to which the Class that follows them, manifestly belongs, as in Chapter the twelfth.

Had this close connected chain of *all* St. John's Prophecies been ever *rightly* stated before, and the truth of it confirmed by as close a connected chain of answerable Events, this essay, it is readily allow'd, might then have been shorten'd by more than one half, and nothing attempted further, than an impartial enquiry into the one Prediction, supposed to relate to the present circumstances of affairs. But whilst nothing of this sort has yet been attempted, as far as the author knows (at least not without much hypothesis, not beyond a very lame arrangement of the three grand Classes only) the arguments above offered cannot but make it appear a very essential and most necessary part of this disquisition, to give in this line of Prophecies and their parallel events as much as reaches down to our times, in order to provide a well-laid and sure foundation for what is intended to be built thereon. And when, after this, it is considered, that if the chain, so justly apprehended to connect the series of Prophecies before us, shall happily be found strengthen'd by historical Facts, and every link of it to be indeed in regular order and without flaw, in such case much good is likely to accrue

crue from the present undertaking; much honour to the glorious Perfections of the Almighty; much credit to our most Holy Religion; much authority to our Sacred Scriptures and the Book of Revelation in particular; it may surely be surmised, on good grounds, that effects of so awful a nature, with the excellent fruits of manly piety and goodness, they are so well fitted to produce, afford more than a sufficient Apology for the method proposed to be pursued; even tho' it should be suspected, this chiefly was intended herein, to improve the present circumstances of time into a happy opportunity of *catching* those *with guile*, whom, as fellow-christians, a preacher of the Gospel ought, in charity, to be deem'd to *affect* most *zealously*, not in word, but in deed.

It is not then beyond measure, to suppose the Reader, from such solid motives, readily inclined to steer his course thro' the entertaining paths of Prophecy, to which he is now invited. Nor will it retard him one moment in his design, but rather enter him on his way auspiciously, to inform him on this occasion, that whatever some great names have been necessitated to invent to the contrary, meerly to support their preconceived hypotheses, yet may it be affirmed with no small degree of confidence, after a great man *, *that all antiquity agrees* in asserting St. John to have been relegated into Pathmos by the Emperor Domitian. There is but one single author (Epiphanius) that speaks in a different strain; and one witness in opposition to a cloud of them deserves not certainly any manner of credit, in a meer matter of fact. Much less, when there are other circumstances, that concur to invalidate his Testimony. In the case, this author contradicts others much older than himself

* Lampe in Proem. ad Joh. Evang. c. 4. §. 8.

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himself and nearer to the times of St. John by some hundred years: He ventures to contradict them without giving in any voucher for his dissent: He intermixes, in his accounts, some facts notoriously false; and he assigns to St. John's exile a period of time (the reign of Claudius, namely) which agrees neither with History, nor with many particulars recited in the book of Revelation. So that it would be weakness, or rank partiality, to place any sort of reliance on what he has been pleas'd to affirm in this affair; as indeed no great weight is allow'd to his report at any time, because of his noted inaccuracy and most credulous disposition*.

Accordingly it is in virtue of the best authority St. John's exile is fix'd to the days of Domitian; and of course the year of our Lord 95 or 96 may without fear be specified as the precise date of his exile, considering how very clearly Chronologers have proved Domitian's Persecution, such as it was †, to have happened about this time †. And if the date of St. John's exile is certain, then the date of his Revelation becomes so too, as the Apostle very positively asserts (i. 9.) and Antiquity confirms, that when he saw and heard the things contained in this work of his, *he was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*. Nor is it unsuitable still further to advance, that as St. John represents his Revelations to have been *Prophecies* (3. i.) of points *sealed up in the book of God*, (v. 1.) which he long'd, (v. 4.) which he had need to be informed

A. D.
96.

* See Blondell des Sybilles ii. 3. p. 145. Fabric. Bib. Gr. iv. 5. §. 7. Vitranga in Apoc. c. i. vers. 2. p. m. 6. L'Enfant Pref. sur L'Apoc. p. 619. Lardner's Credib. App. Vol. I. p. 354--77. and Vol. III. p. 368--79.

† Dodwell Dissert. Cyprian. xi. §. 17. subjoined to Bishop Fell's Edit. of Cyprian.

‡ See Calvis. Dodwell l. cit. Tillemont, Vol. II. p. 121 and not. p. 541. Edit. Paris. Vitranga Apocal. p. 227. Lardner l. cit.

- A. D. informed of, (vi. 1.) and which he much wondered to hear (xvii. 7.) ; as it is evident too, that he could not publish these Prophecies in writing, according to the command he had received, (i. 1, 3.) till after his return to Ephesus, in the days of Nerva, in the year 96 or 97* ; and as he even then asserts his Predictions to relate to *things, which were still, tho' shortly, to come to pass*, (i. 1, 3.) and *things, which, tho' near, were yet to be hereafter* (iv. 1.) ; on these accounts it is not only inconsistent with sound reason and plain matter of fact to pretend to look back into times anterior to these dates, for the completion of any of the Prophecies of this book ; but it is just, on the other hand, to look forward to the days of Trajan, who succeeded Nerva in the year 98, and even to look some way into his reign, after St. John's death, which happened the fourth of Trajan, the year 101, or 2, before we can expect to meet with any incidents leading to, or expressive of the Prophecy, St. John commences his series with.

98.

How much further we must proceed, or which is the fix'd period, on which the first link in the present chain may be safely suspended, this is not to be determined antecedently from any thing, St. John has dropt, any where in his discourse. Nor indeed would it be reasonable to expect, the Apostle should have given us any hints to this purpose ; as this point makes part of the general problem of the book, which leaves us to find out periods, by finding out the events that answer to the representations made of them here, in imagery and figure. It is therefore to the first Prophecy of the series we must have recourse, to gain any solid satisfaction in respect to the particular here enquired after ; and of consequence, it is to a due search into the sense of that Prophecy, and the certainty

* See Baron. Calvis. Pagh, Tillemont, Vol. II. p. 141.

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certainty of it's full completion, our present business must be allowed immediately to lead us, after having stated it in it's own native terms, which, accordingly we find, are as follows.

And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the Seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, come and see. And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him, had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Seal I.

Rev. vi.

1, 2.

The horse, the bow, the crown, and the conquests mentioned in this Vision, give us plainly to understand, that the personage, these circumstances relate to, must have been a *Chief*, a *Warrior*, a *Prince*.—Equally is it clear in the next place, that this leader having a *bow* assigned him, and not a *sword*, as in the next Prophecy, this difference can imply no less, than that this implement of war was peculiar and characteristic in him, and consequently, that he was an *Eastern Prince*, it being well known, both from sacred and prophane antiquity, that, in that quarter of the world, the *bow* was a favourite and distinctive weapon *.—If after this (3dly.) we desire to be informed of the dispositions of this mighty chief, and those he represents, we need but attend, to that circumstance we meet with at the head of this Prophecy, where St. John tells us, that he heard *the first (αὐτὸς) of the four animals †*, or living creatures (ζῶων) saying

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* Isaiah xlii. 18. Jerem. vi. 23. xlii. 9. Briffon. de Reg. Pers. iii. p. m. 287. Amm. Marcell. xxii 8. xxv. 1. ibiq; Vales. Spanhem. ad Callim. p. 277.

† See Beza, Grotius, Vitranga, Wolf.

‡ Beasts, as our Version has it, is too strong for the word ζῶων. Had there been ἄνθρωποι, the construction had been just. As to the figure of the four animals it should be compared with what we find in Isaiah vi. 2. Ezek. i. 5. nor is it without it's use to observe with our commentators, that these four animals are *chiefs* in their kind. The *Lion* among wild creatures; the *Ox* among cattle; *Man* among animals; the *Eagle* among birds.

A. D. to him * *as it were with the voice of thunder* (ἐν
 102. φωνῇ βροντῆς) *Come and see.* For if we look back to
 Seal I. the fourth Chapter, the sixth and seventh Verses,
 Rev. vi. we not only find *four living creatures* mentioned,
 1, 2. *as in the midst of and round about the throne*; but we
 are told, that *the first of them was like a Lion, the*
second like a calf or Ox, the third had a face as a
man, and the fourth was like a flying Eagle. Which
 can imply no less, than that in the difference of
 visage, each one of them was distinguished by,
 they were to represent some remarkable distinctive
 difference in whatever scene they should be made
 to figure or have part in. And then, as in the
 three following Prophecies, the second, third, and
 fourth of these creatures are successively and ap-
 positely made to represent the proper characters,
 not of the *transactions* of each vision, (which the
colour of the horses is intended to express,) but of
 the riders themselves; (as shall be proved and may
 be understood already, by recollecting that the ani-
 mal like an *Eagle* is appropriated to the vision of
Death in the fourth Prophecy) it certainly may
 be inferred on good grounds, that the creature
 with the *Lion's* face, in the instance now before us,
 must likewise be expressive of the *character* of the
 Personage, to which this Prediction relates, and
 of course must be deem'd to set forth † the *roving,*
fierce, and *destructive* dispositions, which this Chief,
 (be he, who he will) and those, whom he is intended
 to represent, should give abundant proofs of, in
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* To make the voice of thunder different from the voice of
 the speaking creature, as our version seems to do, is not con-
 sistent with the Original. It is better expressed in the new ver-
 sion, *I heard one of the four animals with a voice like thunder say,*
Come and see. It should be noted likewise, that instead of φωνῇ
 βροντῆς, the learned Vitringa reads φωνῇ, which Wettstein ap-
 proves of and shews to be the reading of a great many Ma-
 nuscripts, Editions, and Versions.

† See Bochart Hieroz. iii. 2. p. 724.

the transactions, the *conquests*, here expressly declared to be their proper and appointed employment. We may therefore assert in Scripture terms, that this *adversary* of the Roman state (for such he will presently appear to be) should accordingly never cease to *walk about, seeking whom he might devour*. And when the *Lion-like* creature, we are here treating of, is said in character, to have spoke, *as it were with the voice of thunder*, that is, to have *roared* vehemently; it may be justly added, that this same *adversary* should prove a lasting *dread* and *terror* to those, he should be directed to assail, so as that *when he should roar, then should the children tremble from the West*. The incident that should supply our Chieftain and his successor with an opportunity of shewing this offensive tendency of their dispositions, we are plainly told (in a 4th. particular) should be their receiving *a crown*, or having one *given* them; a declaration, which certainly implies no difficulty, unless it should be thought one, to determine with accuracy by *whom* this benefit was to be conferred. And yet even this, one would think, was pretty easy to settle. For seeing all the other Prophecies of the Class we are upon, do, by very evident tokens, shew, they were intended to set forth the several judgments, by which God had decreed to punish and gradually to break the Enmity of the Roman Empire to the Christian name; it is every way suitable to maintain, that the attempts for conquest, which this Prophecy mentions, should be also understood as designed to effect the same Empire in the most sensible manner: and then, since these appointed conquests are in the Prophecy visibly connected with the giving of the Crown, (as being occasioned by something exceptionable in that transaction we must suggest) it is a ready inference to say, that they, who were most certainly to suf-

A. D.
102.Seal I.
Rev. vi.
1, 2.

A. D.
102.

Seal I.
Rev. vi
1, 2.

fer by the effect, could not but be concerned in the cause of it.—And this leads us to a (5th.) and a very material observation, this namely, that seeing they were the Romans, who on this occasion acted the part of bestowing the Crown; and it was never their custom, as all history confirms, to raise any of their Provinces into Kingdoms, but contrarywise a settled practice of theirs to turn Kingdoms into Provinces, where they safely might; it is therefore Self-evident, that the Crown they gave on this occasion, was a Crown, they had seized upon, and were then in possession of, but which, for reasons of state, they thought proper to *give*, or rather to *surrender*, either to the very Prince, that had been stript of it, or to any other, they might chuse to place in his room.—How this mighty and consequential affair was managed, whether by the injured forcing this restitution, or by the invader's free and voluntary resignation, this we had been left in doubt of, had not the Prophecy in a (6th.) particular, that of the *colour* of the horse our Chief is mounted upon, carefully determined it. For tho' it is readily granted, that *white* horses were much in use among the Eastern nations, and also that at publick triumphs (after conquests) the chief actors in those joyous scenes chose to ride *white* horses *; yet in the present case these observations, it is presumed, will not be deemed pointed enough satisfactorily to account either for the difference of colour observable in this horse from that specified in the three that follow, (which, we are told, were red, black and pale) or why the *conqueror* in this Prophecy, (if that be, according to interpreters, the *peculiar* idea we should here attend to) should not, as in the next, have been mounted

* Besides the Commentators, and especially Wettstein, see Ezech. Hieroz. P. i. p. 106. and compare Zachar. vi. 3, 6.

mounted on a *red* horse, instead of a *white* one, similar exploits requiring in emblematics similar representations. We are therefore necessarily led to say, that as *white* is a colour that represents serenity * and a state free from disturbance, whilst *black* in just opposition infers a gloomy scene of grief and sufferings, upon this account the horse in the present vision was coloured *white* to denote that the *main* and *proper* business of this Prophecy, the surrender of the crown, should be carried on in a *peaceful* and *amicable* manner, by mutual agreement and solemn Treaty, to the present seeming satisfaction of both parties. Indeed, that this is the very sense, which ought to be put upon this circumstance, is very clear, from this undoubted remark, that, in the three following Prophecies, the colour of the horse always appears suitable to and duly expressive of the *certain* concomitants of the main and proper business, the Riders are engaged in, as shall be shewn hereafter, and may even now be understood by recollecting only, that in the fourth vision Death is represented as striding a *pale* horse.—The Prophecy ends by telling us, that after the conclusion of this important affair, the Prince thus raised or rather *restored* to the Crown by the invader, *went forth conquering, and that he might conquer, (και ωα νικων.)* It is not said in the usual phrase of these Prophecies, when the certain determined success of operation is intended to be foretold, that *power was given him* to conquer, but in fainter stile, that St. John saw him *gaining some advantages, and going forth to secure them*; which being prophetically told, does not barely leave it doubtful, whether these attempts should be prosperous, but rather pretty clearly determines, that they should *not* be so. Though this at the same

A. D.
102.

Seal I.
Rev. vi.
1, 2

* See Jaubert de Sacrific. p. 171.

A. D. 102. same time may well be thought to be hinted here, that, as this commencement of hostilities, (enter'd upon, as was suggested above, for the recovery of something unlawfully kept back) was not immediately to have it's desired effect; the same talk should for that very reason be, by this Chief and his successors, resumed again and again, till their views were fully attained; and so a perpetual enmity and continued contest should prevail between them and the Romans, with various success, tho' with greatest injury to the latter; all of it on account of somewhat, that should prove, tho' perhaps unexpectedly, a never-failing bone of contention.—And now one may fairly affirm, that agreeably to these remarks, the Prophecy under consideration must be allowed to relate to (1) a Prince, (2) living in or near the times of Trajan: one, whose domains were situated (3) in the East, and whose subjects were remarkable (4) for the use of the bow: one, who was (5) dispossessed of his crown, (6) by the Romans, but by them again (7) restored to it, (8) in the way of amicable Treaty and agreement: one, in fine, who (9) soon after his re-instatement, (10) gave evident tokens of that discontented spirit and settled design of redress, which his (11) successors should not fail to imitate, (12) in all the direful, savage circumstances he should set them the example of.

Whether it would be accounted impartial, roundly to affirm before hand, that in every recited circumstance this Prophecy has actually had it's exact and full completion, is scarce worth determining: but this may be said without offence, that one drop of water cannot well appear more like another, than in the present case the letter seems like the spirit, the figure like the truth, the copy like the Original. In way of proof it may be urged, that, according to the joint testimony of the Greek and Latin hi-

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storians of the age, no sooner had Trajan succeeded in Dacia so as to turn it into a Province (which the best Chronologers affirm, he did A. 105) but, from an ambitious spirit, and a *particular* inbred eager desire of subjugating the *Parthians* *, he not only coined a pretence to quarrel with, but in the year 106 † actually marched into the *East* against them; notwithstanding the fair offers on Cosroes their King to give him satisfaction, he entered Armenia A. 107. claiming right on that country in virtue of Nero's transactions with the King of it, in the year Sixty; and after having drove away or killed Cosroes his brother, who then governed there, he turned it into a Province. He went on into the Kingdom of Adiabene to punish Mebar-sape for his treachery in killing the Roman troops, he had sent him for his defence against Cosroes, and so thoroughly succeeded in his enterprize, that he subdued his whole country. In fine, he entered and quickly overran all Mesopotamia, and to be able to keep it, failed not to possess himself of all it's strong towns. So successful a progress, as might well be expected, led, we are told, to a Treaty between Cosroes and Trajan, by which it should seem the former submitted to resign Mesopotamia and Armenia to the latter, in order to save the rest of his Empire. But how long Trajan was employed in these conquests, or when precisely this Treaty was concluded, cannot with any certainty be determined, for want

A. D.
102.Seal I.
Rev. vi.
1, 2.

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107

of
* Notwithstanding Pliny's praises of Trajan as a lover of peace; yet Dio very expressly taxes him with ambition, and assigns it as the sole cause of the Parthian war. Which is greatly confirmed by what Ammian. (xxiv. 3.) says of him in these words. *Trajanus aliquoties jurando fertur dicta consueisse firmare: sic in Provinciarum speciem radactam videam Daciam; sic pontibus Histrum & Euphratem superem.*

† See Tillemont's Hist. des Emp. Vol. II. p. 562. where the dates of Trajan's journeys into the East are very largely considered, and settled with great accuracy.

Seal I. of those larger informations, which the writings
 Rev. vi. of Arrian, Dio, Marcellin and others, had they
 1, 2. been preserved would have furnished us with.
 A. D. This however may be said, that these transactions
 110. could not well exceed the year 10, as Cosroes we
 are well assured was not at this time in a condition
 of making any very strong or lasting resistance,
 partly on account of the civil discords prevailing
 in his Empire, and partly because all the neigh-
 bouring Princes, whose assistance else he might
 have made use of, had been either subdued or
 frightened into submission. Be that as it will,
 the Treaty entered into, we know for certain, was
 not of long continuance, since we find Trajan
 114 quitting Rome in the year 14 to renew the war
 with the Parthians. What was the cause of the
 rupture, or how long before this time Cosroes had
 infringed his engagements, we are not told with
 precision; tho' perhaps, as Trajan in this second
 expedition again subdued the Kingdom of Adia-
 bene, it is very probable, Cosroes had invaded it,
 or assisted Mebarsape, his friend and neighbour, in
 the recovery of it. Whatever was the cause, Tra-
 115 jan, in the spring of the year 15, set forward on his
 design; passed the Tigris on *boats*, he got built at
 Nisibe; and made himself soon master of the
 Kingdom of Adiabene, notwithstanding the shew
 the Parthians made to oppose him. He also
 subdued Assyria with it's Capital Ninos or Ni-
 nive, and the towns of Arbela and Gaugamela,
 rendered famous by the victories of Alexander.
 Meeting with little or no resistance, he went thro'
 Mesopotamia on to Babylon, or the country that
 still bore the name of that noted city; and then
 crossing the Tigris on *boats*, which he had trans-
 ported by land to the place where the Euphrates
 meets that river, he took Seleucia, with Ctesiphon
 the Capitals of the Parthian Empire, and in this
 last

last city Cosroes *his daughter and his golden throne*. The consequence was, that Trajan turned Assyria and Mesopotamia into Provinces, as he had done before in respect to Armenia, and afterwards did in regard to Arabia, levying large contributions on these conquests of his. As to Parthia, it is plain, he did not use it in like manner; since the next year, the year 116, on his return from Arabia Felix, on account of the revolt of most of the conquered countries, he took the resolution (lest the Parthians, tho' quiet at the time, should have been tempted to follow the example of their neighbours) to *give them a King* of their own, and at the time to enter into *Treaty* and alliance with them, *Accordingly*, says Dio in the life of Trajan, *being come to Ctesiphon and having assembled the Romans and Parthians in a wide plain, he mounted a Tribunal, high raised for the purpose, where having displayed his mighty deeds in a swelling speech, and entered into a solemn Treaty with them*, (as Photius * adds out of Arian) *he afterwards assigned them Parthamaspatēs, or Psamatassiris*, (as Spartian calls him) *for their King, and put the crown on his head*. This was a remarkable transaction; so remarkable, that besides Parthic Games continued at Rome for many years after in memory of this event, Medals were struck on the occasion, in which is seen a King prostrated at the feet of Trajan, with this apposite and notable inscription, *He gives a King to the Parthians* †. It is true, it was not Cosroes; Trajan gave the Crown to; but it is likewise true, that what Trajan did not do, Hadrian did it for him, scarce a year afterwards: for we are expressly told by Spartian, Eutropius and

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others,

A. D.
116.Seal I.
Rev. vi.
1, 2.

* Phot. Bi. l. c. 58. p. 54. edit. Scot. i.

† S. e. Tillemont out of Ocio and Birag l. c. p. 209.

A. D. 117. others, that Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan in August of the year 17, after having thro' necessity, as is most likely, tho' others say, thro' jealousy, withdrawn his troops from Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and so permitted these nations to live by their own Laws and under their own Kings; he removed Parthamaspates, whom Trajan had raised to the throne of Parthia, and restored Cosroes to it, to the great *satisfaction* of the people, who, for this generous deed of his, contracted an *affection* for the Emperor, as Spartian assures. One would have thought, Cosroes had not less reason, than his subjects, to entertain a grateful sense of the favour Hadrian had conferred upon him: yet Spartian tells us, that *not long after* he prepared for war, and had certainly *gone out to conquer*, had not Hadrian found means to keep him in suspense for a while, and, at last, effectually to prevent his design, in an interview he had with him, whilst he was in the East, about the Year 123. Whether they were threats, or promises, or rather pecuniary gratuities, the Emperor employed to this purpose, as on other occasions, is not said; but it is remarked by Spartian, that, in his second journey to the East (which happened about the year 130) Hadrian sent Cosroes *his daughter*, (whom Trajan had carried off as an hostage) and gave him assurances besides, of his restoring him the *Golden Throne*. This lets us into the cause of the dispute between the two Princes; and shews us withal that the Parthian was indeed gaining *advantages* over the Romans, tho' but by slow degrees. In the mean while Cosroes, we may depend upon it, was, for all Hadrian's submissions, not satisfied yet, seeing this condescension had not even the power to engage him to come and see the Emperor in Cilicia, pursuant to an invitation he gave him and other neighbouring Princes. If we wonder,

Seal I.
Rev. vi.
1, 2.

123

130

wonder, Cosroes should not in his disgust have proceeded to open hostilities, we should recollect, that Hadrian was in the East till the year 34, and that when he left it to return to Rome, the Alains made an incursion into Iberia, Media, and Armenia; which not only forced Cosroes to look to his own safety, but brought also a Roman Army into the East, more than sufficient to have checked him. Whether this army continuing near the Euphrates, after the Alains were fled for fear of it, and other Roman forces, dispersed thro' Syria and Palestine to subjugate the Jews, kept Cosroes in awe; or whether the Iberians and Armenians, by being in Treaty with the Romans, were watching his motions, so it is, that we read no more of any claims, or preparations of his, while Hadrian lived. But, when that Prince died, which happened in the year 38, Capitoline informs us, Cosroes instantly renewed his application for the golden throne to Titus Antonine, Hadrian's successor. Had Antonine been of Hadrian's temper, disposed to purchase tranquillity at any rate, it is probable, Cosroes had succeeded in his demand. But so far was this Prince from such meanness of principle, that, with a beoming spirit, he durst to refuse him satisfaction, and even to write him letters, most certainly conceived in very strong terms, as they induced Cosroes to refrain from the expedition against Armenia, he was just about to undertake. Indeed, while all the Princes of the East were courting Antonine's favour, as Dio, Spartian, Eutropius, and Victor severally assure us; and Antonine shewed by his appointing a King over the Armenians at this very time, (witness the medals of the year 39) that he was resolved and no doubt in a capacity to maintain the right Trajan had acquired over this country, but which had been tamely given up by Hadrian; Cosroes had most certainly,

A. D.

134.

Seal I.

Rev. vi.

1, 2.

138

139

A. D. 117. others, that Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan in August of the year 17, after having thro' necessity, as is most likely, tho' others say, thro' jealousy, withdrawn his troops from Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and so permitted these nations to live by their own Laws and under their own Kings ; he removed Parthaspates, whom Trajan had raised to the throne of Parthia, and restored Cosroes to it, to the great *satisfaction* of the people, who, for this generous deed of his, contracted an *affection* for the Emperor, as Spartian assures. One would have thought, Cosroes had not less reason, than his subjects, to entertain a grateful sense of the favour Hadrian had conferred upon him : yet Spartian tells us, that *not long after* he prepared for war, and had certainly *gone out to conquer*, had not Hadrian found means to keep him in suspense for a while, and, at last, effectually to prevent his design, in an interview he had with him, whilst he was in the East, about the Year

123. 123. Whether they were threats, or promises, or rather pecuniary gratuities, the Emperor employed to this purpose, as on other occasions, is not said ; but it is remarked by Spartian, that, in his second journey to the East (which happened about the year 130) Hadrian sent Cosroes *his daughter*, (whom Trajan had carried off as an hostage) and gave him assurances besides, of his restoring him the *Golden Throne*. This lets us into the cause of the dispute between the two Princes ; and shews us withal that the Parthian was indeed gaining *advantages* over the Romans, tho' but by slow degrees. In the mean while Cosroes, we may depend upon it, was, for all Hadrian's submissions, not satisfied yet, seeing this condescension had not even the power to engage him to come and see the Emperor in Cilicia, pursuant to an invitation he gave him and other neighbouring Princes. If we wonder,

wonder, Cosroes should not in his disgust have proceeded to open hostilities, we should recollect, that Hadrian was in the East till the year 34, and that when he left it to return to Rome, the Alains made an incursion into Iberia, Media, and Armenia; which not only forced Cosroes to look to his own safety, but brought also a Roman Army into the East, more than sufficient to have checked him. Whether this army continuing near the Euphrates, after the Alains were fled for fear of it, and other Roman forces, dispersed thro' Syria and Palestine to subjugate the Jews, kept Cosroes in awe; or whether the Iberians and Armenians, by being in Treaty with the Romans, were watching his motions, so it is, that we read no more of any claims, or preparations of his, while Hadrian lived. But, when that Prince died, which happened in the year 38, Capitoline informs us, Cosroes instantly renewed his application for the golden throne to Titus Antonine, Hadrian's successor. Had Antonine been of Hadrian's temper, disposed to purchase tranquillity at any rate, it is probable, Cosroes had succeeded in his demand. But so far was this Prince from such meanness of principle, that, with a beoming spirit, he durst to refuse him satisfaction, and even to write him letters, most certainly conceived in very strong terms, as they induced Cosroes to refrain from the expedition against Armenia, he was just about to undertake. Indeed, while all the Princes of the East were courting Antonine's favour, as Dio, Spartian, Eutropius, and Victor severally assure us; and Antonine shewed by his appointing a King over the Armenians at this very time, (witness the medals of the year 39) that he was resolved and no doubt in a capacity to maintain the right Trajan had acquired over this country, but which had been tamely given up by Hadrian; Cosroes had most certainly,

A. D.

134.

Seal I.

Rev. vi.

1, 2.

138

139

A. D. 139. certainly acted a very injudicious part, had he in such circumstances suffered his resentments to have incited him to a war with the Romans. However, that his resolutions of *conquest* were only deferred, and not laid aside, is apparent from the umbrage he or his son Vologesus, that succeeded him gave Antonine some time before that Prince's last sickness, by the great preparation, they were then making throughout the Parthian Empire. And more clearly still is this evident from the formal declaration of war, that ensued on the death of Titus 162 Antonine in the year 62, at the time that Armenia was disturbed by civil discords, and the Princes bordering on the Euphrates and the Tigris had been wrought up into a league against the Romans. The Parthians began their operations in Armenia, the King of which country they expelled, designing to place there Osroes a Prince of the Royal house of the Arsacides; and when Severien Governor of Cappadocia came with many Roman Legions to oppose them and recover Armenia, we are told by the Historians of this time, the Parthians attacked them, *and killed every officer and soldier they met with.* This was acting like Lions indeed. Nor will the sequel give us reason to alter our opinion. For this Victory *having spread a great terror* every where* (πολυς φοβος says Dio) the Parthians were encouraged to improve these advantages by proceeding to attack Syria and after that Cappadocia; in both which Provinces, after having

* The terror here spoke of was undoubtedly occasioned by the Parthian successes. Yet to give the notion it's full extent, and more particularly to shew the admirable propriety of St. John's emblem in the present case, when he resembles the persons, he had in view, to *Lions*, and their voice to that of *thunder*; it will be of use after Plutarch (in Crasso p. 557. edit. 1655) to note here, that *instead of horns or trumpets, the Parthians used to give signal for battle by a frightful howl, much like that of savage beasts, and the roar of thunder.*

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* See
1620. f.
† As
Prophecy
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Persians,
Saxons, a

ing put to flight and killed, as should seem, the A. D. 162.
 Governors and troops, that attempted to stop their
 progress, they made most *terrible ravages*, in so Seal I.
 much that the Syrians, to escape their *cruelties* no Rev. vi.
 doubt, were ready to join them against the Romans, 1, 2.
 as Capitoline attests. Such were the beginnings
 of this war, which, according to Capitoline, lasted
 four years. During this time many severe battles
 were fought in Syria, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Me-
 dia and elsewhere. At last a decisive action hap-
 pened, in the year 165, near Europa a Syrian town, 165
 in which the Parthians were so thoroughly defeat-
 ed, as not to be able to carry on the war any long-
 er. Most probably it was ended by a Treaty,
 since Cassius the Roman commander came away
 with all his troops, at the same time that the Em-
 pire does not appear to have gained more by these
 successes, than Armenia and Mesopotamia, which
 Trajan had formerly possessed. This at least is
 certain, that from this time to the reign of the
 Emperor Severus, some thirty years downwards,
 we hear nothing of any further contests between
 the Romans and Parthians; and it is remarkable,
 that we read of Aurelius renewing the peace with
 the Parthians in the year 76, which supposes
 a formal Treaty to have subsisted between
 them *. Upon the whole it is evident as the
 noon day, that every thing in the *representative*
 part of the prediction has had it's exactest accom-
 plishment in the history of these times faithfully
 here recited. As to it's further most probable *in-*
tendment, that the Parthian attempts for conquests †
 should

* See August. Hist. Script. vit. Aurel. p. 33. edit. Paris.
 1620. f.

† As conquest (*νικτωρ*) is the proper employment of those, the
 Prophecy had in view, who now may without figure be stiled
 Parthians, it is not superfluous to note here, that among the
 Persians, which was the name the Parthians afterwards bore;
Νικτωρ and *Νικησις* became fav'rite Royal titles.

A. D. should be repeated, till they should at last prove
 165. successful, this, tho' notoriously fulfilled in what
 Seal I. the Roman Empire, both in it's Heathen and
 Rev. vi. Christian state was made to suffer from the Parthians,
 1, 2. and Persians, and Saracens and Turks (all successively possessed of the same country and the same formidable Empire, and all of the same Scythian Original and dispositions) belongs not however to the main design of this Prophecy, but was hinted only to shew the importance of the information, and secure the confidence of the faithful in consequence thereof. One thing had like to have been forgot, this namely, that the Parthians were of all other *Eastern* nations the most distinguished for *the use of the bow*. And yet it is certain, that all antiquity concurs in giving them this character, insomuch that the *Parthian bow* is in all sorts of writers almost as proverbial, as the *Parthian sottishness*. If more formal proofs are wanted, a very large collection of them may be found in Briffonius's excellent History of the Persian Empire and in the later lucubrations of the learned Wetstein on this passage of St. John's; where, by the way, we meet with this useful and apposite remark, that among the Parthian coins some represent a King with a *crown* on his head, and a *bow* in his right hand; whilst others place the *bow* in the left hand, and an arrow in the right. To which may be added Vitranga's Observations, that the Parthian and Persian Kings never appeared in public or gave audiences, without having a *bow* in their hand. But it is time to quit this subject and to enquire into the sense and completion of the next Prophecy, which, therefore, we proceed, without further enlargement to state, worded as we find it.

Seal II. *And when he had opened the second Seal, I heard*
 Rev. vi. *the second beast say, Come and see. And there went*
 3, 4. *out*

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* See
 lit. Rom

out another horse, that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

A. D.
165.

Seal II.
Rev. vi.
3. 4.

Upon considering these words attentively and in their due connexion with what went before, it must needs immediately appear, that the actor in this visionary scene cannot but be, as in the last, in (1) a Chief, a Warrior, a Prince; (2) living or near the times last spoke of; (3) not of Eastern, but Western, Roman mould; (4) permitted by Heaven, and (5) empowered by a respectable authority, that of the Senate of course, (6) to declare and (7) to wage war with certain (8) savage enemies of the State; in the prosecution of which task, tho' it should prove (9) extraordinarily bloody, and the certain source of (10) deep and lasting enmity, yet should the Hero be observed (11) remarkably laborious and indefatigable, and thro' such his steadiness of purpose (12) unexpectedly successful.—Most certainly the notion of one mounted on *horseback* with a *sword* in his hand, and invested with *power to take away peace*, cannot possibly be thought to imply less, than that the person spoke of is (1) a Chief, a Warrior, a Prince: and as to (2) his living in or near the times last treated of, this too legitimately follows from this Prophecy being immediately successive to and numerically linked with the former. The assertion of his being (3) a Roman, is founded on the *express*, and we may say *designed* difference of weapon in this and the foregoing Prediction; and on the *sword* being, in those days, peculiarly *Roman**; whilst his acting (4) by *divine* permission seems a point not less evident, than the former, partly from our Lord's similar phraseology

* See Joseph. de B. J. III. 3. Gell. x. 25. Lips. de Milit. Rom.

A. D. 165. gy in his declaration to Pilate *, that *he could have no power against him, except it were given him from above*; but especially from the difference of expression here observable, when the Hero is said to have had *power given him*, and also to have had *a sword given him*: for unless we refer the latter incident to a *human* and the former to a *Divine* permission, we must be guilty of introducing a superfluous or unmeaning sameness, where every word and every sentence should be thought, and may be made, to have a very distinct and a very proper signification. In this way of proof then, not only the Hero's *Divine* Commission is clearly made out, but this also is evinced, that he acted at the same time (5) on some great *human* authority: which needs this addition, that as we are treating of a *Roman* Chief, who had *power given him from above to take away peace from the Earth*, or *Roman Empire* †; and there was no single man or body of men in the *Roman* State, that could give this Chief or Emperor the *Sword* of war, or authorize

* John xix 10.

† It is necessary to observe, that the word *Earth*, which here we meet with for the first time, always means the Empire in this first Class of Prophecies. It most certainly does so in the Prediction before us, because no power can be supposed capable of taking away peace from the *whole* Earth; and if but from part of it, that part had undoubtedly been specified; were it different from what the subject itself leads us to suggest. Nor can we be surprised at the Empire being called the Earth, since besides that the Roman writers never scarce speak of it but under the name and notion of the world, in which the sacred penmen have followed them: it is notorious too from the Old Testament, that the Babylonian Empire is often called the Earth and the World; not to say now, that these appellations have even been bestowed on the single Kingdom of Juda. Indeed had our Translators been consistent with themselves, and construed the Original in every similar case, as they have done sometimes, by the word *land*, and not by that of the Earth, the whole ambiguity had been effectually taken away. * See Seal IV. note (e) V. note (x) append. to Seal VI, note (n)

thorize him to brandish it, but the *Senate and people*, they, therefore, in the present case must be understood to have done so. And this, by the way, is an unanswerable Evidence that this Prophecy relates to times, in which the power of the Senate made yet some figure in the State, and the reigning Prince was remarkable for his deference to it's resolves; when too it teaches us very clearly, that the contentions of this period could not possibly be of a civil and *domestic* nature, seeing this harmony between Prince and people is not suitable to such a discordant State, and the Senate can upon no supposition be understood to have been asked, or freely to have consented, that, upon their joint authority, *peace should be taken away from the land*, or a war be commenced and carried on against the people. Indeed as it is little short of an absurdity, to suppose the governing powers of any State freely conspiring to the destruction of themselves in that of the people; so are we naturally led to suggest, that *the taking away peace from the land* by this Chief, the Senate consenting, must mean an effect not intended by him, or those that *gave* him the *sword*, but by divine direction appointed to follow upon some joint action of theirs, owing perhaps to some imprudence, and so rightly assigned as the cause of it. And what can we so rationally think this action to have been, but (6) a declaration of war against some foreign enemy, this implying and effecting a *removal of peace* as certainly, as the *killing one another*, which, the Prophecy declares, was, hereupon, to ensue, does in that connexion incontestably infer (7) the actual waging of war. This however is not all we are to note here. It should be observed further, that as the expression of *killing*, or according to the Original (*σφαζοι*) *butchering one another*, implies (8) a savage, barbarous disposition; a disposition never

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charged

A. D.
165.Seal II.
Rev. v.
3, 4.

A. D. 165. charged on the Romans, and inconsistent with their character as a civilized nation; the butchery must of course be thought to have been at least begun, if not solely carried on, by those enemies the Romans were in this interval to be engaged with, and they are accordingly, in a peculiar manner, accounted to have been of this unsocial, inhuman temper. It is true, that the words *one another* seem to plead against laying the blame all on one side. But then it is true likewise, as the learned Vitringa very judiciously observes, tho' to a different purpose, that the expression of *one another* does not necessarily imply the notion of mutual and exact retaliation. It does not most certainly in those words of our Lord, they *shall betray one another, and shall hate one another*; nor in that exhortation of St. Paul's to the Galatians, *let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another**; and therefore there is no absolute necessity, in the present case, for extending the imputation of butchery to the Romans, as well as to their antagonists. At least it seems just to say, that if the Romans did pursue such cruelty, contrary to their established character, they were in a manner forced into it by their enemies fierce and unrelenting rage. In every way no one can doubt of this further circumstance, that this war should prove (9) extraordinarily bloody, any more, than can be overlooked the meaning or propriety of the Chief of this Vision mounting a *red horse* †, or his † being called by a name (*μαχαίρα*) which properly denotes a sacrificial knife. Nor yet does it seem hard to grant, that this contest should become

* Math. xxiv. 10. Galat. v. 26.

† 2 Kings iii. 22. Zach. vi. 2. Rev. xii. 3. Bochart. Hieroz. p. 1. lib. ii. c. 7. Wettstein in loc.

† Suet. Claud. c. 15. Curt. viii. 14. Ælian. V. H. viii. 3. Wolf. ad Math. xxvi. 51.

come (10) the source of deep and lasting enmity. For tho' the *taking away peace from the land* (as not relating to any domestick difference for reasons given) does necessarily suppose and imply some hostile proceeding, and in the present case, as proved, a declaration of war against some foreign enemy; yet the words manifestly carry our thoughts beyond this act, to that *resentment* by which they, against whom such measure should be pursued, should be found incited *to take away peace from the land*; which to confine to the present period only, is more than the words will justify, and less than they most naturally indicate. It had been sufficient to have said, that the Hero of this Vision was permitted to take away peace, if nothing more than a present war was intended in this expression; but *pointedly* to say, that he was empowered to take away peace from the *Empire*, (when yet his design and endeavour must have been to take it away chiefly and at least as much from the enemy, and his great sword proves, that he actually should press them sorely in the Event) this shews clearly, that the effects of these proceedings should, and could only prove *heaviest* to the Empire, by being made *lasting* and perpetual. And when, after this, we consider, that the banishment of all amicable disposition and intercourse was, according to express prediction, to be followed with a horrid butchery, there is room to infer, that the exuberancy of malice so evident in this circumstance was chiefly mentioned to assure us, it should admit of no checks sufficient to eradicate it, but prove as *lasting*, as the opportunities fit to excite it. All which is greatly confirmed by observing, not only that this interpretation falls in with the avowed design of the Prophecies now before us, tending to disclose the instruments, by which, Providence had decreed, should be brought on the ru-

A. D.

165.

Seal II.
Rev. vi.

3. 4.

A. D. in of the Roman Empire ; but further, that, un-
 165. less we take this part of the Prediction in this en-
 Seal II. larged and most natural sense, it will be difficult
 Rev. vi. to shew with what propriety this incident came to
 3. 4. be mentioned here at all. Suppose the slaughter
 at large as in reason it can be deemed, yet as long
 as the Prince is said to have had a *great* sword, great
 in resistance and success, the destruction occasioned
 in this Interval, if of no further progress, it is
 plain, could never have been considered, as very
 momentous, or have contributed to enliven the
 hopes of the faithful, in regard to their enemies,
 the Romans, being soon brought down to an inca-
 pacity of injuring them : Indeed the information,
 if limited, could not but have appeared as of
 small consequence, in comparison to what had been
 already or might be expected to be declared here-
 after in respect to this matter ; and nothing short
 of a repetition and occasional continuance of the
 evils here specified, may well be thought to have
 been worthy a particular Revelation. We must
 then inevitably allow, that what was to be done in
 this period, was to be a sample of what should be
 done and punctually repeated in succeeding times,
 as often as opportunities should offer. Or, in other
 words, the unshaken friends to Christian truth and
 goodness were incited to steadiness and patience,
 by assuring them, that the same formidable im-
 pressions, which certain savage nations, within this
 interval, should be seen to make upon the Roman
 state (excited thereto, as in the former Prophecy,
 by the Romans themselves, now injudiciously de-
 claring war against them) should be, again and a-
 gain, projected and executed by the same nations,
 till by this and other concurring incidents, already
 or hereafter to be declared, the Idolatrous King-
 dom then opposing the Kingdom of Christ, should
 be effectually lowered, and finally destroyed. It
 remains to be noted in respect to our Hero's (11)
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indefatigable assiduity and (12) unexpected success, that as the latter has already been said to be implied in his being furnished with a *great* sword, great in resistance and operation; so does the former disposition of his, most visibly appear to have been hinted at here, inasmuch as the animal, or living creature employed on this occasion to excite St. John's attention (and which in this, as in the foregoing and two succeeding Prophecies relates to the *temper* of the horseman) is expressly called the *second* of the four, and was therefore (iv. 7.) the creature, that was *like a calf* or Ox*, whose strength and steadiness in labour is not more known to be characteristical and true in nature, than it is described and alluded to in figure and otherwise by every kind of author.

In virtue of these remarks one may venture to affirm the meaning of the Prediction before us to be extremely easy and plain: Not plainer, however, can it be allowed, than is the completion of every particular of it, in the transactions of the times, the former Prophecy brought us to. Of this we shall be convinced, if we are at the pains to recollect, that no sooner was the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, or Antonine the Philosopher, (for he goes under these different names) got rid of the Parthian war in the year 165, as has been proved; no sooner was he, by this *fortunate* incident, *Providentially enabled* to turn his thoughts and endeavours from the dangers of the state in the *East*, to those that threatened it in the *West*, but, according to the express testimony of Capitoline, he made a solemn address to the *Senate* and people to engage them to enter into a war with the *Marcomans*, a barbarous *savage* nation bordering on the Danube, whose

A. D.
165.

Seal II.
Rev. vi.
3, 4.

* Deut. xxxiii. 17. Prov. xiv. 4. Ps. cxliv. 14. Bochart. Hieroz. p. 1. lib. iii. c. 6. §. 3.

A. D. 165. whose hostile dispositions and attempts had, during the Parthian war, been kept back by different expedients. In any other Prince a condescension of this sort had been something extraordinary ; but it was no more than what one might well expect from Aurelius, as he was remarkable for consulting others in every thing he undertook, and still more remarkable for his *inviolable regard and deference to the Senate*, whose *authority* he studied to *support, more than any Prince that went before him*, as Capitoline assures us. Such an unexampled union, between the Crown and the great council of the Nation, at this time prevailing, it was no wonder the Emperor's representation of the necessity of a war with the Marcomans was admitted as well founded, and agreed to without reluctance. But it was something *fatal* and one may imagine not foreseen, that when the resolution of a war was known to have been taken, and preparations accordingly making in the Empire, A. 166, the Marcomans should have had influence enough to engage their neighbour-Nations and many in number to join them in the contest, as if it had been their own. However, so it happened by Heaven's high decree. And we meet in Capitoline, Aurelius Victor, Dio, Pausanias * and others, with a long list of the several parties to this league, in name and number so *frightful*, that it is not at all surprising the people at Rome should have been alarmed, as is asserted, when once they came to be informed of it. This joint force (which reached from the borders of the Rhine, near Gaul, to the Eastern extremities of Illyricum, now Morlachia and Dalmatia) was opposed, formidable as it was, by the Emperors Antonin, and Verus his Colleague, in person, and by their Generals in different parts of the Empire, as

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occasion required, with different success; of which under other circumstances the particulars might be expected, but are not needful to be rehearsed here. It is sufficient to say, that, during the 14 years that this war lasted (for the barbarians were not brought to a peace till the year 180) notwithstanding many very signal victories and final conquests on the side of the Romans, yet were the miseries, caused by the enemy in the western parts of the Empire, great and inexpressible; partly on account of the many Cities and whole Provinces *cruelly* wasted and destroyed, and partly on account of the many armies totally ruined and inhumanly *butchered*, as may be seen in the authors above mentioned and in Eusebius, Orosius*, Eutropius †, and Ammian ‡. Indeed so remarkable was this war in every respect, that Capitoline scruples not to call it, such *as had not been within the memory of man*; which Eutropius repeats, adding, that it might be compared *to the Punic wars*. What greatly increased the misfortunes of the times was, that whilst these commotions and distresses deeply affected every part of the Empire, the *famine* §, and the *plague* § raged violently both in Town and country. Aurelius however, whom Dio, Victor, and others, unanimously represent, as given by Heaven to soften the direful judgments inflicted on the nation, was not disheartened, but kept on steadily and *assiduously* in his design of subduing the enemies of the state; insomuch that Capitoline and Eutropius, willing to inform us of the means, by which he was enabled at last to *triumph* over every difficulty, fail not, among others, to ascribe his success to the *indefatigable labour* he underwent, *magno, ingenti, labore*

A. D.
166.

Seal II.
Rev. vi.
3, 4.
180.

* vi. 15.

† viii. 12.

‡ xxxi. 5.

§ Hist. Aug. Script. p. 38. Ammian, xxiii. Eutrop, viii. 12. Baron. Annal.

§ Hist. Aug. Script. p. 28.

A. D. 180. *labore suo gentes asperrimas vicit.* Whether to say, that he *totally* vanquished the barbarians his enemies, will be thought strictly consistent with Seal II. Commodus his successor's still being obliged to Rev. vi. contend with them for a time, this seems more 3. 4. than doubtful. But this is not questionable, if Dio and Capitoline are credited, that Aurelius reduced them to the very lowest state, to such a want of men and provisions both, as made every one believe firmly, that had that brave Prince lived a little longer, he had had the satisfaction of seeing these savages subdued, and their country turned into Roman Provinces. Indeed well had it been for the Empire, had Commodus not been concerned in putting the finishing hand to this long and bloody contest. The Empire then might have been quite secured against any *future* attempts from this Quarter. As it was, the war was rather *abandoned*, than *terminated*, to speak in the language of Herodian and Lampridius, and whilst a peace was made, which seems more to have been *purchased*, than imposed by the conquerors, it is not at all wonderful, that nations left as barbarous as they were found, and as closely united too, and whose *implacable* and rapacious temper was bridled by nothing stronger, than a few written articles and a few scattered forts on the confines of their territories, should have resumed their operations as often as they were at liberty to improve the favourable opportunities that offered, and so should have furnished the world with evident tokens that the war, commenced in Aurelius's days, did indeed, notwithstanding some occasional interruptions *take away peace from the land* without remedy. But this hint must suffice here in respect to the ravages, the Marcomans and their savage allies are well known, and shall be proved hereafter, to have actually exercised

cised in succeeding times on the Roman Empire, whilst Idolatrous, and even when Christian: not omitting, in the mean while, to observe the very high importance of the Prophecy before us, which, just as the former prediction, had set forth the Enemies, whom Providence intended the Romans themselves should, tho' undesignedly, provide in the *East* to subdue their stubbornness, adds, so appositely, those, that should in like manner be roused by the Romans in the *West* to the same fatal purpose, and thro' the same Almighty Direction. And since such visible weight and regularity of instruction cannot but lead us to expect, that the succeeding discoveries (if still relative to the miseries the Empire was doomed to suffer) should from *external*, turn off to display some *internal* evils, most aptly conspiring to weaken and consume it; one cannot well forbear thinking, that in a work like what we are upon, a work so rich in marks of wisdom, unequalled and divine, this easy and most natural progress cannot possibly have been counteracted, and of course, that what next offers itself to our consideration, may justly be deemed, even beforehand, to have a regard to those sufferings, that should be occasioned by the impotency or wickedness of the Roman Government itself: yet, lest this argument should be pronounced a prepossession, intended to be infused into the Reader's mind to cover some weakness of Interpretation, it is readily resigned to it's own good fortune, and it's place supplied* by the introduction of the Prophecy itself, in it's native dress and language. Accordingly thus we read:

And when he had opened the third Seal, I heard the third beast say, come and see; and I beheld, and lo a black horse, and he that sat on him, had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of

E

wheat

A. D.
180.Seal II.
Rev. vi.
3, 4.Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

A. D. 180. *wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the Oil and the Wine.*

Seal III.

Rev. vi.

§. 6.

If it be considered, that the *Chief* or Prince, to whom this prediction relates (for a Chief or Prince he appears to be from his being mounted on a *horse* as the rest) is not furnished with either *bow*, or *sword*, or other *warlike* implement, as in the two foregoing Prophecies and in the immediately subsequent one, but instead thereof is drawn with a *pair of balances in his hand*, the noted emblem of Justice *; it is clearly perceived, that the task this Agent should be concerned in, should not be of a foreign and warlike, but of a *domestic, Judicial* nature. What cast his proceedings in this way should be of, could never have been determined, had not this particular been discovered in the *colour* of the horse, he is said to have mounted; which being *black*, and of course expressive of *mourning* and *grief* †, it is without suspence instantly understood, that his transactions would prove greatly oppressive and *cruel*. And that we might not be at a loss what to adscribe such *tyranny* to, we are carefully informed, that the *animal*, or living creature, which on this occasion acted the part of Instructor to St. John, (and which in this Emblem, as in the rest, serves to disclose the disposition of the chief Agent in it) was not *like a man* (as the others are (iv. 7.) *like a Lion*, or *like a calf*, or *like a flying Eagle*) but in a very remarkable variation of phrase, only *had a face as a man*; had nothing else that was *human* about it, but it's visage; whereby it is plainly intimated to us, that the *Tyrant*, here spoke of, should

* Job. xxxi. 6. Prov. xvi. 11.

† Joel ii. 6. Neh. ii. 10. Bochart Hieroz. p. 1. lib. 2. c. 6. Math. Exercit. Text. xlix. p. 459.

should not be one, forced into *severities* by un-
toward incidents, or fatal struggles for power;
but one *naturally* cruel; one incited to his *lawless*
deeds, by an inbred *inhuman* disposition, and by
passions *brutal* and ungoverned; one in short, that
should be different from a *savage* beast in nothing
but his outward shape. Nor is this all, we are
made acquainted with; but still further to shew
us the neglect or perversion of Justice in these
times, we are told, a *scarcity* of provisions so
great, as that the *daily* wages of a *penny** for la-
bour could only purchase what each man needed
of *bread* for a *day's* sustenance†, should be
brought on, not by any accidental *sterility*, or by some
extraordinary Divine dispensation, but by the
contrivance and design of some individuals, wick-
edly led from some private views of theits to
hurt or injure the Corn. For the voice, St.
John heard, we may observe, came not from
the *throne*, nor was it directed to an *Angel* (either
of which would have given, what it uttered, the
air of a *divine* decree and divine dispensation) but
it was sounded in the midst of the four animals,
the appointed instructors of our Prophet on this
occasion, and therefore was declarative of an e-
vent, not of *Divine* appointment, but entirely
owing to man's device, and we may say, to his
wicked presumption: especially, since this same
voice proceeds after this to *address* itself directly
to the chief actor in this scene, by cautioning
him in express terms, *not to injure the Oil and*

E 2

Wine

* Math. xx 2, 9 Lips. Exercit. in Tacit. p. 175 The Ro-
man penny or dragma was about sixpence of our money

† The measure here mentioned, that is the Chenix, held no
more than one day's food. See Grotius, Vitringa, Wetstein
and other Commentators, and Budæus de Affe, V. p. 538. and
Ott ad Joseph T. ii p. 318. Edit. Havere,

A. D.
180.Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

A. D. *Wine* *, left the scarcity should be increased.
 180. For this clearly leads us to infer, not only that this
 Seal III. Chief, or some invested with authority under him
 Rev. vi. should cause the scarcity here mentioned; but should
 5, 6. cause it precisely by a shameful designed *waste* of
 food in the midst of plenty; none certainly need-
 ing to be cautioned against *injuring* one kind of
 necessary, but he, that had been some way con-
 cerned in injuring another. One more particular
 should be noted, this namely, that as *wine* and
oil made no where part of the common food so
 much as in Italy; as provisions were no where
 taken such care of as there; and no country so
 often affected with famine, or so easily † laid under

* It may not be amiss to note, that, in a famine but a
 few years before Commodus, Antonine bought up for the
 use of the people, a large quantity of Wine and Oil as well as
 of Corn, as Historians remark; (Eutrop. viii. Vict. and
 Capitol. in Anton.) and it is noted in like manner of Severus,
 who succeeded Commodus, that when he died, he left to be
 distributed to the people a vast quantity of Corn and Oil both,
 and left too an Estate, of which the income was particularly to
 be applied to purchase Oil, for the daily use of the people. Hist.
 Aug. Script. and Salmas. and Casaub. in not. Confer. Suet. in
 vit. Cæs. 38. Ner. 12. Tacit. Annal. xiv. 47. ibiq; Lips. Domi-
 tian's edict against planting of Vines in Italy and the Provinces,
 because it was thought to make the Corn scarce (Suet. c. 7. Phi-
 lostr. Vir. App. vi. 17.) seems to have lasted to the days of Pro-
 bus. Eutrop. vit. Probi. Hist. Aug. Script. p. 240, 245. ibiq;
 Casaub. It may be added, that Aurelian not only encreased the
 quantity of Corn and Oil appointed by his predecessors to be
 distributed gratis to the people, but established, besides, a fund
 for giving them also a certain portion of meat, intending to have
 done the same in respect of Wine. See Victor, and Hist. Aug.
 Script. p. 224. seq.

† *Fere omne frumentum aliunde ad populum Romanum advehi-*
tur, says Dio in the life of Claudius; and nothing more com-
 mon in the Augustan History, than the mention of Rome being
 reduced to scarcity or famine, by the ships from Alexandria being
 stop'd. Those that usurped the Empire of the East, almost con-
 stantly practised this violence, to bring Rome to their terms.
 Commodus, bad as he was, remedied this evil somewhat, by
 appointing a company of Merchants, that should fetch Corn
 from

der this misfortune, as Rome and it's dependencies, which, without the assistance of other Nations, could not supply it's inhabitants with necessities; it is thence pretty evident, as well as from the connexion of this Prophecy with those that go before and follow it, that the transactions of this scene must all of them relate to the Roman state and Roman Emperor.

Should this representation of particulars be allowed to give a natural and intelligible sense to this third Ænigmatical Emblem, what follows, it is hoped, will not less clearly evince the strictest correspondence of History to the contents of it, in all it's determined circumstances. Most surely, if it be observed that, notwithstanding some slight commotions in Britain, Gaul, Dacia, Pannonia, and Afric, yet no *formal* war was carried on any where by the Emperor Commodus, to the beginning of whose reign (A. 180.) the last Prophecy brought us; we must allow that one main article of the Prophecy is confirmed, and of course, that whatever military acts of his we read of in the Historians, and whatever the medals of his times set forth in respect to his taking, repeatedly, the title of Emperor, all that must be referred to the events of the Marcomanic war, in which he attended his Father, or the little advantages his Generals gained in the several popular contentions above-mentioned. He himself, it is certain, never left Rome and it's environs, from the time he buddled up the treaty with the Marcomans in order to repair to it. Rome was his delight; and Rome no doubt suited his effeminate, luxurious, and abandoned disposition, better than a Camp, and the labours and hardships that attend it. Such his

A. D.
180.

Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

from Afric as often as none could be had from Egypt. Hist.
Aug Script. p. 52.

A. D. 180. his humour and indulgencies, it might perhaps not have been worth attending to, had their effects centered in himself; but, when we find his depraved taste and ungoverned passions led him into a conduct, as oppressive and injurious, as any we can form a notion of, it is not in the power of a reflecting mind to overlook those blemishes, rendered so hideous in their consequences. Above all must it affect the human heart most sensibly, to be informed, upon the very best authority, the joint testimony of the writers of these times, that the unbounded gratification of his passions having bereaved this Prince of all power to controul his *inbred* disposition to *cruelty* and revenge, and having at the same time brought him, by necessary consequence, into very strait and penurious circumstances, he failed not to pursue, without flint and without remorse every the most detestable measure, so it looked likely to fill his treasury, and furnish him the means to go on, uncontrouled, in his fav'rite system of brutality. It is to no purpose, unless to shock a modest and a tender mind, to be more particular in the recital of his several vices, and his several schemes of raising money; but this the present design requires to be mentioned, that upon an unprejudiced review of the History of his life, the business of every year may justly be said to amount to little else, than the *murder* of relations, or friends, or fav'rites, or Senators and great men, with all their families and adherents, tho' mostly in form of *Law* and an appointed *trial*, yet upon frivolous suspicions, or the *suborned* testimonies and *false* accusations of detestable *informers*, encouraged to be zealous in the affected defence and support of injured Majesty. It cannot after this, surprise any one, that this Monster of cruelty, should one day have taken the resolution, as Lampridius reports, of burning the whole City, and

massacring

Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

massacring all the people in the Ampitheatre for no other reason, but because he thought he had been laughed at; nor yet can it create wonder, that this wretch should, in cool blood, and as he was taking his afternoon's repose on his couch, have been able to draw up a list of sixteen persons, says Lampridius, of a great number of the most distinguished members of the Senate, says Herodian, whom he intended to have executed the next day, by way of new-year's gift to the people, had not his design been providentially discovered, and a conspiracy, in which he fell, the last day of December 92, prevented the execution of it most effectually. Indeed Commodus was all that the Senate at his death declared him to be; *a butcher; a parricide; an Enemy of the Gods and of his Country; one that had outdone Nero and Domitian; one, that had lived to his own eternal shame, and the destruction of his fellow citizens.*—In a reign so constituted, in a Prince whose every thought was taken up with purposes destructive of the state; the care of the subject, and the security of their enjoyments, it is evident, could not possibly make any part of the character of either. On the contrary, as confusion and lawlessness are the inseparable concomitants of a cruel administration; so do we find the Historians very full in their recitals of instances, that prove their prevalence during this period. Particularly are Herodian, Dio, and Lampridius very express, not only in taking notice of an *artificial scarcity* at this time, a scarcity prevailing in the midst of plenty (*quum fruges non deessent*) but in acquainting us besides with the names and quality of the worthy persons, by whose means and for whose private purposes this very oppressive incident was brought on. They were, it seems, two great Ministers of state, Cleander and Papirius by name, who being envious of,

A. D.
180.Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

192.

A. D. 192. of, and plotting to supplant each other in the esteem of the people, took the honest resolution of causing a famine in the land, tho' in different ways. Cleander, as Herodian tells us, *laid out a vast sum of money to purchase an immense quantity of Corn, which, as it came in, he lodged in his granaries, with the design of distributing it to the people and soldiery, when the scarcity he had occasioned, should begin to pinch them.* Papirius, informed, no doubt, of what his Competitor was doing, and studious to render his scheme abortive, made use of his power, as Commissioner of Provisions, *to get what he could into his hands and secretly to destroy it, as Lampridius and Dio testify; the latter adding in express terms, that Papirius had thus rendered the scarcity greater, in hopes the people would lay the blame on Cleander, and hate and murder him for it.* So fatal are the contentions of Ministers! So certain the perversions of right in every state, where all is left to their supreme and free management! It is therefore too, Lampridius observes, on this occasion, that Commodus *did every thing by others*, and that it was to this very *inattention* to matters of state must, among the rest be adscribed, the *lawless* inhuman devices of these favourites of his.—In the mean while, as this execrable conspiracy to cause a famine, (for which Cleander immediately suffered and Papirius some time after) does not upon the strictest recollection appear paralleled * in any part of the Roman History; and as

* The famine under Claudius (not the great one of all, but another at Rome only) which Dio according to some seems to hint, was occasioned by Messaline and Claudius's freemen (tho' this hint is very obscure and scarce discernable) was yet, if brought on by them, wholly owing to the high price their avarice led them to sell corn at in the winter, when none could be had but out of their granaries: and this can never be compared with the scarcity of this Prophecy, which evidently was occasioned by violence and waste.

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in itself it is too remarkable and striking a lineament in the proper, *lawless* complexion of the reign, pointed out in this Prophecy, that it should have been omitted; one may suppose, the propriety of mentioning it not capable of being disputed. But whether the Reign of Commodus (a Reign but of twelve years and a few months; a Reign at the same time that had nothing in respect to *famine*, or *pestilence*, or *Tyranny*, or *bloodshed*, very distinguishable from the Characters or Events falling to the share of his successors;) whether his reign was worthy to be made the subject matter of a *peculiar* Prophecy, and might not have been included in the next following Prediction, (where tho' we read of more than in the present case took place, yet do we observe every thing that happened in the days of Commodus;) this is apprehended to be so obvious, and withal so momentous a difficulty, that it well deserves to be removed by a few remarks. And first, since the Scriptures represent a *cruel* Reign *, as a very heavy *divine* Judgment, and even Heathen writers † are not backward in acknowledging as much, led thereto by the light of reason, which in the case is consenting; it is upon this footing apparent that, in a *full* system of Divine Judgments, such as the Prophecies before us were intended to disclose, a peculiar sample of this sort could not well have been omitted: whilst it should seem, no place could have been chose so proper for

A. D.
192.

Seal III.
Rev. vi.
5, 6.

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* Hof. xiii. 11. Esaj. xiv. 20. xix. 4.

† Plinius's words in his Panegyric are very remarkable. *Quid enim præstabilius est aut pulchrius munus Deorum, quam castus & Sanctus, & quam Diis simillimus Princeps.* Whilst Tacitus's Confession (Annal. xvi. 16) on occasion of Nero's cruelty, is not less worthy of notice. *Ira illa numinum in res Romanas fuit, quam, non ut in cladibus exercituum, aut captivitate urbium, semel editam, transire licet.*

A. D. the mention of it, considering it's coincidence with
 2. the order of time, and the confusion it probably
 Seal III. had introduced, had it been deferred to the reigns
 Rev. vi. of either Severus, or Caracalla, or Heliogabalus or
 5.6. some other succeeding Prince of that hideous stamp;
 not to say now, that it would have been very difficult
 to have found a circumstance, whereby so clearly to distinguish
 these Tyrants from one another; as was the *artificial* scarcity
 of Commodus's reign. It is well worth notice, in the next place,
 that a *bloody* Reign, such as was that of Commodus,
 was something very extraordinary at this time; something, the
 Romans had not seen since the days of Domitian near
 one hundred years before; and was, besides, so directly
 opposite to what they had experienced under the two last
 Emperors, the two Antonines, that as it greatly deserved
 to be *particularly* mentioned for this sudden and remarkable
 reverse of fortune it introduced, so likewise could it not but
 convince the friends of Virtue most strikingly, that this was
 indeed one of those Divine Judgments, by which Providence
 intended to subdue their enemies, seeing they *peculiarly*
 suffered by it. It may still further be observed, that the
 bloody, lawless reign of Commodus was with the greatest
 propriety separated from the rest and held out to public
 view in this Prophecy, not only because the wicked example
 set in this Prince's transactions, became a precedent to,
 and was pleaded by many of his successors, as good Authority,
 but because, in consequence of the proceedings of his reign,
 were introduced so wide a distance and settled enmity
 between the Senate and Prince, and such a dangerous
 ungovernable Power in the soldiery, as really proved
 the very *source* of all the formidable *constitutional*
 evils, the Empire after his time laboured under,
 to the day of it's destruction.

destruction. In fine it should be remembered, A. D. 192.
 that tho' under Commodus some *seditions* happened here and there, and a *famine* and *plague* prevailed, yet were these incidents in nature, degree, and duration, very different from what occurs, of that kind, in the next period: and then it is certain besides, that neither *civil* nor *foreign* wars, nor yet any *persecution*, helped to encrease the miseries of this Prince's reign, as they did those of his successors; and that, however grievous and *mournful* his *cruel* dealings were, yet do they appear to have been confined to Rome and it's environs, and scarce to have had any effect in the other parts of the Empire, as had the misfortunes of the succeeding Period.—And now, surely, we are enabled to judge, both of the propriety and of the completion of this Prophecy, in virtue of the several proofs here offered; proofs seemingly so fully sufficient for all the purposes of conviction, that they need not by any additional enlargement to be made to detain us from our further enquiry, into what more the Divine wisdom has condescended to inform us of, in the next prediction, expressed by St. John on this wise:

And when he had opened the fourth Seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him; and power was given unto him over the fourth part of the Earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger; and with Death, and with the beasts of the Earth. Seal IV. Rev. vi. 7, 8.

Death's stated and extensive *Empire* *, together with the *activity* and *dispatch*, tho' in figure, yet necessarily connected with the task in charge, abundantly justify our sacred limner in drawing him as a Chief, mounted on a *horse*, for his more con-

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spicuous

* Rom. v. 17.

A. D. 192. spicuous and ready conveyance : and when we consider, that Death and *Hell* (or the Grave) are in nature, and by Scripture verdict *, faithful friends and inseparable *companions* ; it is not less clearly perceived, that it was every way right, to represent the one, the latter, *following* the other. Then, tho' death's *keenest* thirst after the *breathless* tribe, and, his *loved* abode and *fullest* sway among such †, are circumstances, not likely to be questioned by any ; yet questioned it may be, and with greatest reason, whether this truest *character* of the Prince of terrors could have been expressed better, than here we see it, by making the instructing *animal* of this scene, the *fourth* in order, to bear (iv. 7.) the resemblance of an *Eagle* ; especially considering that maxim of our Lord's, that *where-soever the carcase is, there will the Eagles be gathered together* ‡. After this, since such is the dread Instrument Almighty Justice purposed to employ in the execution of his present resolves, it were undoubtedly absurd to expect, aught of a *lively* cast should be the effect of so *deadly* an influence. More suitably are we informed, that Death *had power given him*, or was empowered by *Celestial Decree* ||, *to kill* ; to deprive of life and so to destroy. This indeed is his business, his *proper* business ; as surely observable, where he is directed to be active, as *paleness* is unavoidable, where life and warmth are no more. Which leads us to allow the extreme justness, with which the *horse* in

* Ps. xviii. 5. Isaiah xxviii. 15. 1. Cor. xv. 55. Rev. xx. 13.

† Ps. xlix. 14. Habak. ii. 5.

‡ Math. xxiv. 28. Bochart. Hieroz. P. II. lib. ii. c. 4. p. 184. where that learned man also proves, that in the Scriptures the name of Eagle is often given to Princes, and that the Chaldeans and Assyrians are particularly called so, for the destruction and ruin they brought upon Judea and Jerusalem. Jerem. iv. 13. Lament. iv. 19. Habak. i. 8.

|| See Seal II.

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Lev. xx
24. Eze

in this emblem is drawn, of this *languid* ghastly colour *; a colour not barely suitable, but more suitable than either *black* or *red*, or rather *only* suitable in the present case, considering the *variety* of deaths, the emblem tells us, that was to prevail within this period. Indeed, to go on, it was not the *sword* †, or war only, war domestick or foreign; nor yet *hunger* ‡, or famine, added to this evil; Death was to make havock with in the projected plan of deserved Judgment: but, in aid of both, *death* || or pestilence was to be called in, as a still more sure and quick implement of destruction; and then, to fill up the measure of woe, and heighten the distraction of these times, either in due succession, or at different intervals, were to follow some dreadful *ravages*, from the *beasts*, (*ἑρπω*) *the wild beasts of the Earth* §, the savage Tyrants and persecutors

A. D.
192.

Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

* See Bochart. Hieroz. P. I. lib. ii. c. 7. p. 109. and Brawn de Vest Sacerd. p. (171.) sqq. the Commentators in Pole's Synopsis and the learned Wetstein furnish passages, many out of the Classics, in which death is described as *pale*, and some, in which *paleness* is represented as a consequence of *famine*. To which, in evidence of the greek word *χλωρος*, here used, signifying *paleness*, it will not be unentertaining to add, what Zonaras, used by Vitringa, observes, that Constantius, the Father of Constantine was called Chlorus, *διὰ τὴν ἀχρότητα*, because he was *pale*.

† Lev. xxvi. 25. Jerem. v. 17. xvi. 4. Math. x. 34.

‡ Jerem. xlii. 14. Lament. ii. 19.

|| Jerem. ix. 21. xv. 2. Our Author may besides be said to have imitated here the Paraphrasis and seventy Interpreters, who constantly construe *pestilence* by death, as Beza, Grotius, Mede, Vitringa and others have observed and proved. It is added by Grotius, that famine and pestilence are often joined together, as Math. xxiv. 7. and that it is an old greek proverb, that after a famine comes a plague.

§ It is readily granted, the ravages of wild beasts have often been predicted as a Judgment, and have often proved the consequence of a famine and plague. Of the first we find instances Lev. xxvi. 22. Ezek. xiv. 15. 21. of the latter in Deut. xxxii. 24. Ezek. v. 17. and Philostorg. H. Ecc. xi. 7. and Arnobius advers.

A. D. secutors within the Empire. Good God what a
 192. scene is here! And is it possible *any flesh was to be*
 Seal IV. *saved* in such great, such various tribulation*! Yes,
 Rev. vi. *in wrath God remembered mercy.* A fourth part
 7, 8. only of the inhabitants of the Earth†, or Empire,
 were

advers. gent. This hinders not, but that still the savage beasts of this Prophecy should, in a figurative sense, be interpreted of cruel Tyrants and Persecutors. 1st. Because the discourse is not about wild beasts at large, but the *wild beasts of the Earth*, or land; savage creatures from among the inhabitants of it, and therefore savage creatures of the human kind: next because fierce and cruel nations and tyrants, vexing and oppressing others; persecutors and enemies of the Church and people of God; not only come under the name of *beasts*, but more than once under the titles of *beasts of the field*, and *beasts of the land*, the very expression here used. See Pl. lxxx. 13. Isaiah lvi. 9. Jerem. xii. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 8, 25, 28. Hos. ii. 12. 1. Cor. xv. 32. comp. with Acts xix. 23. Rev. xi. 7, xiii. 1. 3dly. Because the Earth, to which the beasts belong, is the same Earth, over a fourth of which Death had power given him, and therefore must relate to the inhabitants of the Empire, and so the beasts must be from among them, and of the same species. 4thly. Because the writers of the very times we are here treating of, the writers of the Augustan History, and Lactantius, above all others, and Eusebius, scarce ever give any other name to the several Tyrants, they are speaking of, but that of beasts; *bestiæ*; *belluæ*; *fera*. 5thly. Because it may be affirmed, that such an irruption of wild beasts, as this Prophecy mentions; an irruption equal to the famine, the plague, and the sword, and to be felt in every Part of the Empire, cannot be proved either by Sacred or Prophane History ever to have happened, but in a last and total desolation of a state, and desertion of a country, which certainly was not the case of the Roman Empire, as, (not to appeal to fact) the Prophecy asserts, that three parts in four of it were to be preserved. In fine, because it cannot be well questioned, but that a full insight into the History of this period, and a just sense of the connexion of the Prophecy of the 5th. Seal with that before us, will afford ample confirmation to what reason, and testimony sacred and prophane, have so fully settled.

* In the following passages the several judgments of this Prophecy are recited. Deut. xxxii. 24. 25. 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. 1 Kings viii. 37. 2 Chron xx. 9. Jerem xiv. 12 xv. 3. xxi 7. 9. xxiv. 10. Ezek v 12, 17. xiv. 15, 17, 19, 21. xxxiii. 27. Amos iv 6, 10 Matth. xxiv 6, 7. Luke xxi. 11.

† That the fourth part of the Earth should be interpreted of a fourth

were *accursed from God*; which, tho' an affecting proportion at first view, must yet be allowed a great deal less than what the wickedness deserving such an union of severest judgments might have been expected to have brought on. Be that as it will, this we are abundantly sure of, upon the whole, that the times of this Vision would be *perilous* in extreme, and not less clearly are we acquainted with the several methods, that should be pursued to make them so*. How long these visitations should last, we are not informed of as *explicitly*,

A. D.
192.

Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

a fourth part of the *inhabitants* of the Earth, one may believe, no one will deny, as none but they could be killed by sword, or famine, or pestilence, or persecutions: and that the *Earth* here spoke of, must be understood not of the Earth at large, but of the Roman Earth or Empire, this too it should seem, could not well be questioned. For such a sense is not only suitable to the language of the New Testament (Matth. xxiv. 14. Luke ii. 1. Acts xi. 28. xix, 27. xxiv. 5,) and of the book of Revelation in particular, in which the Earth, when not contradistinguished to the sea, always denotes this; but more directly it appears that the Judgments of this Prophecy (not to say anything of those of the foregoing and following Predictions) have all actually prevailed in the Roman Empire, and no where else in like manner; and therefore it looks very incongruous to suppose any circumstance in these predictions should in any manner set forth what may concern the rest of the world. See Seal II. note (+) p. 24.

* Lest any should be prejudiced against ranking *Persecution* among the judgments of this Prophecy, as Christians only and not Heathens seem to be affected by this expedient; it is necessary to observe, that besides the certain decrease of inhabitants by their death or flight, and the no less certain ruin of all useful arts and commerce for want of hands to cultivate them, it always has been found, that whilst the State was sure to be weakened by these unavoidable effects of persecution, the persecuted always increased in number and influence and power, so as for their oppressors to have been ever forced to desist in hopes of securing themselves; which, being duly considered, must make it very plain, even without appealing to the evidence of History in the case, that if the savage beasts of the Empire were induced to add this greatest of all cruelties to the miseries of these times, they were indeed seeking for their safety in their ruin.

A. D. *explicitly*, as of the rest ; tho' this one may be
 192. tempted to suggest, that as this Prophecy accumulates all the Judgments of the three former
 Seal IV. predictions, and adds those of pestilence and per-
 Rev. vi. secution to them, the period, in which all this
 7, 8. was to be transacted, cannot well have been of less continuance, than that which those events appear to have taken up jointly. But this is conjecture. It is to History we must have recourse for the truth ; which, if it should, in fair detail and due connexion carry us forward from the events of the last period to the transactions of the next, there would be just reason for deeming it supplemental to and expressive of the Prediction. Let us see, how the case stands in reference to this particular, and not to this only, but to every other we find here specified.

Commodus, whose assassination in December of the year 192, closed our connexion in the last instance, was succeeded by Pertinax, and after his reign of 87 days, by Julien, who held the scepter but 66. During that interval, which, upon the whole, was but of five months, there was not indeed any *foreign* war, but there were warm *domestick* contentions about the succession, Falco under the former and Sulpicien under the latter, doing all in their power to secure it to themselves ; besides which it is also observable, that the petulant *soldiery*, whom Commodus had by his *indulgencies* made ungovernable, not only *murdered* Pertinax in his palace in open day, but after this had the unparalleled assurance of putting the Imperial crown to sale from the walls of their barracks.—Whilst this was doing at Rome, three formidable *Competitors* arose in three several parts of the Empire ; Niger in Syria, Severus in Illyricum, and Albinus in these Kingdoms. The latter was bought off by Severus, who made him Cæsar, but

but the contest continued *bloody* and without adjustment between the other two, till Severus, (who in the month of June of the year 193 had seized on Rome and the Senate and caused Julian, the purchaser of the crown, to be assassinated) having had the good fortune of gaining three several *decisive* battles, at last put an end to the dispute (A. 194.) by *killing* Niger, who fell into his hands, and *destroying*, without mercy, all his Generals, relations and adherents, wherever he could meet with them.—Flushed with these successes, Severus attempted A. 195. to revenge himself upon the *Parthians* *, for having afforded assistance to Niger. Yet as his ambitious and haughty temper could bear no rival, he carried on this design of his but slowly, for the present, extremely desirous, before all things, to *crush* Albinus, who still stood in his way. To this end he picked a quarrel with him, and even tried to have him assassinated; but that failing, he waged open *war* against him in Gaul; which was not ended till the year 197 when Albinus having at last been beat, in a *bloody* battle he fought on the 19th of February near Lions, laid *violent* hands on himself to escape the barbarities of the Conqueror—Severus now came to Rome, where, as he had done in Gaul to all the relations and friends of Albinus, and before to Niger and his adherents in the East, he gave a loose to his revengeful, inhuman Passion, and *massacred*, without the least regard to age, sex, or condition, all he knew, and all he was made by informers to suspect, to be disaffected to him. Towards the latter end of the year he returned

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* The Reader is desired to take particular notice of the proceedings of the *Parthians* during this whole period, as they will afford proof abundant of the truth of the *first* Prophecy and of our interpretation of it.

A. D.
193.

Seal IV
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

194

195

197

- A. D. into the East, and the spring following (A. 198.)
 198. after some *contests* with the Jews and Samaritans in
 Seal IV. Syria, and with the Armenians in their Country,
 Rev. vi. he marched against the *Parthians* in earnest and
 7, 8. soon subdued and ravaged all their country to the
 very Capital, so as to bring them, without much
 reluctance into a Treaty, which he himself fully
 perceived was all he could in prudence expect to
 procure in the present juncture. Having in his re-
 turn made some, tho' fruitless, yet very *bloody* at-
 tempts on the City of Atræ in Mesopotamia A.
 199, 200 199. he spent the whole following year (200) in
 still pursuing Niger's friends; visited Egypt in the
 201, 2, 3 years 201 and 2; at last in the year 203 he arrived
 at Rome, and immediately resumed the horrid
sanguinary practices, he had pursued there before.
 208 Nor did he leave the City again till the year 208,
 when the *commotions* that happened in this King-
 dom the preceding year, appearing to him to be
 of great consequence, he resolved, tho' old, to
 come hither with his whole family, not doubting
 but his personal appearance would greatly con-
 tribute to settle matters upon a solid foundation.
 210 And indeed that during the *two* years and some-
 what more, he was here, he did do great things,
 and gained very signal advantages over the ene-
 mies of the State, is undoubted: but it is evi-
 dent too, that he purchased these advantages at
 the expence of an infinite deal of *blood*; which
 being added to what he spilt in the several *do-*
mestic contests and *foreign* wars we have recited,
 and to what his Governors of Provinces and the
 Magistracy of several cities shed in their inhuman
persecutions * of the Christians in different parts of

the

* We should recollect in this place, that since the days
 of Domitian, the very time the Apocalyptic predictions
 were delivered, no Prince had been so adverse to the Christians

as

the Empire, ever since the year 197, cannot but give us an Idea of a very *bloody* reign, and therein an evidence of the truth of the Prophecy, at least with regard to the articles of the *sword* and of the *savage beasts* of the Empire.—Caracalla, who by *poisoning* his Father made way for his succeeding him, in the year 211, was, if any thing, more *cruel* still than Severus. Before he quitted Britain, he took care to *destroy* most of his Father's servants; and when he came to Rome, he began his horrid and numerous *murders* with the *assassination* of his own brother, in the very arms of his mother, A. 212. He went the year following into Gaul, thence into Germany* the year 214, the year 215 into Dacia, and the year following into the East, waging *war* with all the nations in his way, and exercising the most unheard of *barbarities*, till, in the year 217, a conspiracy against him *took* him off unexpectedly after a reign of six years and two months. In this *bloody* progress of Caracalla the *Parthians* among others felt the effects of his rage, who therefore too failed not to revenge themselves on Macrinus, his successor, as soon as they had an opportunity: and tho' a peace was agreed upon before the end of the year; yet were several battles fought and much *blood* spilt, to the loss and disgrace of the Romans.

G 2

Perhaps

as Severus. For this supplies us with a pretty clear intimation, that the Prophecy before us cannot be placed higher, and that it very appositely begins near or with this Prince's reign; especially when it is certain also, that to the reign of Decius, for 38 years downwards, no formal persecution prevailed.

* It is to be observed, that under the name of *Germans* or *Allemands* are, among others, comprehended the *Marcomans*, whose transactions from Caracalla's reign down to the close of the period we are in, and further, should not be overlooked, as they give evidence incontestable for the contents of the *second* Prophecy and our comment on it; that nation very plainly appearing never to have been *at peace* with the Romans.

A. D.
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Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

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A. D. Perhaps had Macrinus been suffered to live in
 217. peace, affairs might have taken a more favourable turn, considering his natural temper and disposition, which are said to have been pretty tolerable. But the *soldiery* disliking the strictness of the discipline he endeavoured to introduce, and being besides corrupted by some secret practices, proclaimed Heliogabalus, Emperor, in the month
 Seal IV. Rev. vi. 7, 8. of May of the *succeeding* year: which of course brought on a *contest* between the two *Competitors*, and a battle on the 7th of June, when Macrinus, tho' in all probability he might have conquered, fled away cowardly, and so exposed himself to be taken and *killed*, with his son Diadumenus. Heliogabalus, now sole Master of the Empire, reigned
 218 3 years and 9 months, undisturbed by *foreign* wars, it is true, but so violently urged on by his *cruel* and ungovernable passions, that scarce did the streams of *blood* ever run fuller, in any reign than in his, partly in gratification of his own *brutal* inclinations, partly in honour of his *new* God, Elagabal, and partly in vengeance on those that were *aspiring* to the crown. Had he been able, he would even have *dispatched* his nephew Alexander Severus, tho' he himself had adopted and designed him for his successor. But the *soldiery*, for once, did what was right and becoming the patrons and protectors of the young Prince: tho' they may be said to have carried their regard too far, when thinking Alexander not safe, for all their watchfulness, they *fell* upon the insatiable monster, they
 222 dreaded, in the beginning of the year 222, and, in their fury, gave him his mother and his favourites for *companions* in his *death*.—Alexander who succeeded Heliogabalus of course, was undoubtedly a Prince of very excellent dispositions, and not in any degree stained with the vices of his predecessors. He was more like one of the Antonines,
 and

and as much beloved by his subjects as they were. A. D. 222.
 Yet even this Prince, good as he was, but unfortunately living within this *accursed* period, was not without his *Competitors*, of whom the authors expressly name three or four: nor was he free from *foreign wars*, as well in the *Eastern* as *Western* parts of the Empire. The *Parthians*, or Persians, (as now they came to be named, on account of the change of family in the throne) began their incursions into Mesopotamia, Syria, Media, and Armenia in the year 226; whilst the *Allemans* (among whom were the *Marcomans*) did the same near the Rhine and Danube, the very *next* year. The *former* Alexander marched against, in Person, the year 232; and overcame, as seems most likely because of his publick triumph at Rome the year 234. But the latter he had not the satisfaction to see in like manner subjected to his sway; inasmuch as his Gallic Legions mutinied against him (spirited up by Maximin) and *assassinated* him, his mother and his friends the 19th of March 235.—Alexander's fall was a great misfortune to the Empire, as it introduced a course of *civil* contentions, which, added to *foreign wars*, brought it to the very brink of ruin. For Maximin, who by his horrid *Rebellion* had opened his way to the throne, besides exercising unheard of *cruelties* against Alexander's friends, and, out of spite to him, as it is said, *persecuting* Christians (or at least designing it) had, during his three years *usurpation*, *cruel wars* with the *Allemans* and other nations of Germany: and during the same time was forced to defend himself, against the two Gordians, who had *revolted* in Afric; and after their *murder*, against Maximus and Balbin, whom, in the midst of terrible *seditions* and horrid *bloodshed*, the Senate found means to nominate Emperors. Such was the confusion of his reign; which, as might well be expected, ended in the *murder* of himself, family, and friends, and of all his competitors likewise;

Seal IV.
 Rev. vi.
 7, 8.

226

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A. D. likewise; so that, by the month of July 238,
 238: Gordian the Younger (made Cæsar the year be-
 Seal IV. fore by the Army and Senate) found himself in
 Rev. vi. possession of the throne, when he had least reason
 7, 8. to expect it.—Besides the *revolt* of Salinien in
 240 Afric A. 240, Gordian, a Prince too good by much
 for the *sad* times he lived in, had the further mis-
 241 fortune, in the year 241, of being attacked, on one,
 hand by Sapor the *Partbian* or Persian King (that
 bitterest *scourge* of the Romans for near thirty years
 downwards) and on the other by the Franks and
Germans and their several Allies. These last his
 Generals gained great advantages over, whilst he
 in person, did the same over the Persians: and yet
 thro' the *intrigues* of Philip his successor, he was,
 as he returned from Mesopotamia, formally *de-*
posed by his Army, and *murdered* in March of the
 244 year 244.—Philip, tho' he had been able to se-
 cure the crown by his perfidy; was not, however,
 able to secure a better fortune, than his master had
 had before him. For he too, had his *foreign* wars
 in Mesia and Pannonia (tho' he found means to
 make a peace with the *Partbians*) and had more
 than one *Competitor* to contend with. Besides
 which it is remarked by Historians, that towards
 the latter end of his Reign, the year 249,
 249 there were, with a *famine*, sundry *bloody* com-
 motions in divers parts of the Empire, and a *per-*
secution against the Christians in Alexandria, which
 ended in a *civil* war among the Heathens them-
 selves. At last Philip went into Pannonia to
 chastise Decius, whom the *soldiery* had created
 Emperor; but went to his own destruction and
 that of his son likewise, as the Event clearly prov-
 ed, since, whilst he was defeated in battle and *killed*,
 his son was *murdered* at Rome by the Guards.—
 Decius, who was conqueror, reigned but two
 years; yet, short as his reign was, we observe it
 distinguished

distinguished, however, not by *civil* contentions only, fomented by Priscus and Valens; nor only by very bloody wars in Gaul and Thrace, with the *Germans* and Goths; but by both these visitations, rendered still more afflictive, thro' a *persecution* against the Christians, extraordinarily *severe* for the time it lasted; and thro' the further infliction of a *pestilence*, which, from the latter end of the year 250 raged all over the Empire for twelve, some say fifteen years together.—Decius, as several of his predecessors had been, was with his son *killed* in battle, the year 251, and was succeeded by Gallus; who, for the *treachery* he was suspected of to his Sovereign, was abundantly punished, by finding himself involved in a *war* with the Goths; his subjects oppressed with the *plague*, and with a *famine*, that now was added to the rest of their sufferings; and a *competition* for the crown carried on by Emilien Governor of Pannonia, which cost Gallus and his son their *lives* thro' the defection of the Army, in May of the year 253.—Emilien was made and remained Emperor, it is true; but before he could reach Rome, the Army in Rhetia having chose Valerien, he was, as usual, *assassinated* by his own troops, about August this same year, after about three or four months anxious parade of an empty title.—Valerien, who by Emilien's untimely fate had his way cleared to the throne, is, by Historians, represented as a good Prince, at least in respect to his management of civil affairs. Yet in his single reign, (so had Heaven decreed!) we see *every* evil that had prevailed under his predecessors, and *every* evil, the Prophecy before us foretold, should prevail, during this grand period of divine Judgments. Orosius and Eusebius expressly testify, that the *plague* and the *famine* made terrible havock at this time; and this Prince's *sanguinary* edicts against the Christian Bishops and Clergy, recalled

A. D.

249.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7, 8.

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by

A. D. by his son Gallien when he became Emperor,
 253. will not suffer us to doubt of the severe *Persecu-*
 Seal IV. *tion* which the *savage beasts* of the Empire now
 Rev. vi. carried on, for three years and an half, to satisfy
 7, 8. their insatiable rage. Nor is it less apparent, that
 254. during this interval *the sword returned not empty*
from the blood of the slain or the fat of the mighty. It
 travailed thro' the land, most woefully, in it's west-
 ern part, in Gaul, Illyricum, Italy, Mesia and
 elsewhere, by a flood of barbarous nations, of
 Francs, Burgundians, Quades, Goths and such
 like savages, ravaging with unheard of *cruelty* and
 vast *devastation* wherever they went; and this so
 irresistibly, that Gallien, to whom Valerien had
 committed the care of the Empire in these parts,
 found it adviseable to enter into Treaty with Attila
 King of the *Marcomans*, by his means to give
 some kind of check to the several nations leagued
 with him against the Romans, and thro' this con-
 nexion to oppose, or at least to stop the Goths
 somewhat in their terrible incursions. As to the
 258. East, affairs were there in full as bad a situation.
 For not only did the Scythians carry *fire* and
sword thro' the large Provinces and most noted
 Cities of Asia and Bythinia: but Sapor, King of
 Persia (who ever since the peace made with the
 Emperor Philip had been quiet, but was now ex-
 cited against the Romans by one Cyriades, a run-
 away, pretending to the Imperial name and dig-
 nity) did the *same* in Armenia, Mesopotamia,
 Syria, Cilicia, Cappadocia and so on; insomuch,
 that had he not been more careful of his *plunder*
 than conquests, he might, in all probability, have
 rendered himself master of all Asia. Valerien,
 who had reserved the care of the East to himself,
 259. marched in the year 259 against the Scythians
 from Antioch (where he was come the year be-
 fore) but was too late to prevent the *mischief* they
 had

had done, or chastise them for it. He therefore went on into Mesopotamia, to recover what the Empire had possessed in that Province, or to defend it against the *ravages* of the Persians. This proved a fatal step to him. For, in a battle that was fought there in the year 260, this poor Prince was *betrayed* by Macrien into the hands of Sapor; who, notwithstanding the largest offers from the Romans, and the warmest entreaties of all his neighbour Kings, never could be prevailed with to resign his Royal prisoner, but kept him in close captivity; a captivity rendered the more insupportable thro' the variety of unworthy treatment he was subjected to; till, in the year two hundred and sixty-nine, Sapor did him the favour to *kill* him, but the dishonour to the Majesty of the Roman name, to order his body to be *flawed*, his *skin* dressed, dyed red, and hung up in a Temple; where, in the days of Constantine the Great, it still remained, as a letter of that Emperor to another Sapor, King of Persia, preserved by Eusebius, expressly testifies.—Gallien, who since the captivity of his Father had the reins of Government, was a Prince of a very bad character, and, among others, so wholly addicted to his pleasures, that he entirely neglected all affairs of state, and acted as unconcernedly, as if the Empire had been in the profoundest peace and highest prosperity. No wonder, therefore, if the several barbarous nations, which surrounded the Empire both in East and West, resumed their accustomed *ravages* and *massacres*, or if the King of Persia was encouraged, by the weakness of this reign, to *re-enter* the countries he had visited before, and give them fresh proofs of his shocking cruelty. All this, one may say, it was extremely natural, in these circumstances, to expect. Nor was it less natural, at the same time, to imagine, that some

A. D.

259.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7, 8.

260

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Competitors

A. D. 260. *Competitors* to the crown should have risen, and even *more* than in any former reign: but for *thirty* of these *Tyrants* to have sallied forth, at once as it were, in the several Provinces of the Empire, this is astonishing and unparalleled: what *havock*, in the mean while, must have been made by these several Pretenders, in their sharp and repeated rencounters with each other, is as readily understood as, that, considering the *blood* they spilt, and the *blood* the Persians in the East, and the barbarians in the East and West, both shed most plentifully, wherever they went, the Empire must, after all it suffered before, have been almost depopulated, so as scarce to have had subjects enough for the *pestilence* and *famine* to carry off, which yet, we find, continued raging, especially in the East. Indeed the Empire was at this time in so deplorable a condition, that it must infallibly have undergone a total dissolution, had it not pleased Providence to relieve it out of this dangerous crisis; on one hand by permitting the *assassination* of Gallien, under the walls of Milan, A. 268, about a year before the *murder* of his father Valerien (as he was fighting against the Tyrant Aureolus) to take place; and on the other by raising a succession of Princes, who, by their good qualities and valour should be allowed, *for the elect's sake*, gradually to lessen the appointed miseries of the times and by such a hopeful, tho' slow return to it's pristine health and vigour, fit the state for all the glory and happiness to be bestowed upon it at the full establishment of the Gospel, within it's borders, not many years after.— Of the Princes in view, the first was Claudius II. Gallien's immediate successor, who tho' he had *competitors* to struggle with, (Zenobia in the East, and Aureolus and Censorinus in the West) yet was he enabled totally to destroy some, and greatly

Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

268

ly to weaken the rest. Nor this only. But after a signal *victory* over the *Allemans* near Verona, to the lessening of above *half* of them, he had a much greater favour still granted him in respect to the Goths, Ostragoths, Gepidæ, Heruli, and other barbarous nations, who had invaded the Empire, to the number of 320,000; when by his unexpected, tho' dear bought, *successes* against them, and by the *plague* and *famine* co-operating with his endeavours, he had the satisfaction to see the remaining few (not 20,000) reduced to the necessity of submitting to him, glad to receive at his hands some districts to cultivate and settle in. Thus proceeded this mighty Hero: tho', to his cost, he found the *plague*, that had conspired to raise his glory, now conspired to bring on his ruin, by seizing on his *life*, and laying him in the *Grave*, before he could enjoy the fruits of his labours. This happened the year 270: and an incident undoubtedly it was, from which much might have been apprehended. But the times were somewhat more favourable, and no bad consequences ensued. Claudius's valour, tho' his other excellent qualities were not, was, to the advantage of the Empire, transmitted to Aurelien, his successor, who, we find, employed it as actively and to as good purpose.—Aurelien, indeed, had not any trouble on account of Quintillus, Claudius's brother, being chose Emperor before him, inasmuch as Quintillus was *killed* by his own troops after not more than twenty days reign. But then he had a good deal of *business* cut out for him by Zenobia, Achilles, and Firmius in the East, and by Tetricus in the West. However he overcame them all, and absolutely recovered the several Provinces, they had wronged the Empire of. He also was successful against the *Allemans*, Francs, Vandals, Juthungi, Goths, Scythians and other nations

A. D.
268.Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

270

A. D. 270. nations, that had made fresh *irruptions* into Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, Thrace and other Provinces of the Empire; and either drove them away quite, or forced them into a peace. In consequence of which several victories, and his terminating the *seditions* at Rome, he was deservedly called the *Restorer* of the Empire. This, in the mean while, must not be forgot (as it is an incident of great importance in the History of the next Class of Prophecies) that Aurelien could not clear Dacia of the Goths, who had *settled* in it, in too great numbers during the late troubles; but was forced quietly to *resign* that Province to them, transporting the Romans that were in it, into Mesia, where he formed another Dacia for their abode. At last in the year 275, as he was preparing for a war with the Persians, probably because they had assisted Zenobia against him, a *design* was formed on his person, by some officers of his Army, which had it's effect; and by *depriving* him of life, prevented him a *second* * time from executing his decrees for *persecuting* the Christians.—Upon the demise of Aurelien, there was an *Interregnum* of seven or eight months, spent in messages and consultations between the Senate and the Army about the choice of an Emperor: which time, as it might well have been expected, the *Allemands*, Franks, Vandals, and other nations near the Rhine, failed not to improve to the hurt of the Empire, by their *irruption* into Gaul; whilst the *Persians* were preparing to disturb the East, after their accustomed manner. Nor was the choice of Tacitus, in the month of September, tho' unanimous,

* Eusebius acquaints us (vii. 30.) that the first time, and that not long before his death, Aurelien was frightened out of his resolution by a clap of thunder that broke near him. This time he did sign his sanguinary decrees, as Lactantius acquaints us, but his death rendered them ineffectual.

unanimous, and attended, soon after, with a signal *victory* over a *new* swarm of Goths or Scythians from the Palus Mæotides, able to do much to the relief of the Empire; as the *soldiery* not relishing an Emperor of the Senate's choosing, resolved to get rid of Tacitus, as they had of most of his predecessors, by *stabbing* him; which they did in March of the year *following*, after his having reigned about six months.—Florian, Tacitus's brother, without staying for the Senate or Army's electing him, ventured to take upon himself the Imperial dignity, as if it had been hereditary: but the Army, by proclaiming Probus Emperor, soon convinced him that he had been too hasty in his resolves. However, as the Senate and almost all the Provinces, had, notwithstanding the irregularity of his promotion, acknowledged him for their Emperor, he would not quit his dignity without shewing his value for it, by risking to maintain it. He accordingly prepared for a *decisive* action with Probus, who, being the more artful of the two, declined and retarded it, till the excessive summer heats of Asia should have enfeebled the Europeans, Florian's Army consisted of; not doubting but his own troops, more used to the climate, as being Orientals; would thereby gain a signal advantage over their opponents. And so it proved. For the Armies having met near Tarsus in Cilicia, the resistance of Florian's troops, thro' weakness and sickness, tho' in number they were superior, really proved insignificant; inso- much, that the leaders of them thought it most adviseable, under these circumstances, to put an end to all further contests and *bloodshed*, by *sacrificing* Florian to the utility of the public. Thus Probus got and kept possession of the throne, (A. 277.) but not quietly either then or after, however successful he was in his undertakings. His troubles

A. D.

275.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7, 8.

276

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A. D. les began with the contests he was forced to carry on, against the nations that had invaded Gaul; 278. of whom, however, he is said to have *killed* no Seal IV. less than 400,000, A. 278. The next year Rev. vi. he subdued the Goths in Thrace and elsewhere. 7, 8. 279 He was after this as prosperous in Egypt. He also gained his ends of the Persians, by frightening them into a peace. In fine, he *settled* several *barbarous* nations in Thrace and other countries of the Empire; of whom, those that proved unfaithful, he had the satisfaction to punish so effectually, that very few of them were permitted to return home to tell their perfidy. So great and so extensive were these several successes, that (abating for an universal *famine* Malala affirms to have then prevailed) the Empire might, at last, have possessed a happiness it had not known for many years past, had not the turbulent spirit of man, or rather the *rebellious* spirit of the times, prevented the enjoyment. Saturninus *revolted* in the East, 280 and against him Probus was forced to send a body of troops, which took him and *killed* him. Proculus, who revolted in Gaul, shared the *same* fate. And so did Bonosus in Rhetia, tho' it cost him some more trouble to subdue him. In fine, a Tyrant in this Kingdom, whose name is not mentioned, having presumed to do after the like sort, Probus found means to *dispatch* him privately without shedding the blood of the innocent. So 281 that at *last* peace seemed to have been restored to the Empire by this Prince's excellent virtues and bravery. But alas! it was shortened; not lasting a year, since, for some insults offered to the Romans by the *Persians*, Probus thought proper to declare war *against* them A. 282, which was a circumstance so much the more affecting, as, in the midst of his preparations for his intended expedition, Probus was *assassinated* by his soldiery, displeased with

with their Emperor for calling them out so soon to fresh toils, from the ease and indulgence they were perhaps not unreasonably thirsting after. However Carus, who, by the Army's choice was immediately appointed Probus's successor, without the Senate meddling in it at all, after having, A. 283, sent his son towards the Rhine to repress the *Allemans*, and after having himself made a terrible slaughter of the barbarians that ravaged Illyricum, Thrace, and Italy itself, proceeded against the *Persians* with his younger son Numerien; and so well timed and conducted the enterprize Probus had left unexecuted, that he not only recovered Mesopotamia out of the hands of Varanes, then engaged in civil contentions, but even entered Persia and seized on the very Capital. The joy, which so great success could not but give him, was not, in the mean while, more solid and durable, than the empty title of *Parthicus*, tho' less criminal, than the sacrilegious denominations of *God* and *Lord*, which, on this occasion, his Medals testify, were impiously lavished upon him. For as he lay with his Army near Ctesiphon, a dreadful storm of thunder and lightening, we are told, singled him out, so as to *kill* and *burn* him in his tent, in the beginning of January, of the year 284. This very great misfortune was rendered the more pressing, as it happened at a time, when an extraordinary famine with divers infectious disorders were making terrible havock in divers parts of the Empire. Nor do we find that Numerien, tho' at the head of a victorious Army, performed any thing, that might, somewhat have eased the grievous pressure of these affecting incidents. On the contrary, from the best Authority we learn, that he immediately quitted *Persia*, even without the formality of a Treaty: and what is worse, we are informed, that, in his way back, somewhere in Thrace,

A. D. 282.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7, 8.

283

284

A. D. 284. Thrace, Aper, his father in law, who had long thirsted after the Imperial dignity, laid violent hands on him, and *killed* him in his litter; not doubting, but that, as others before him had been, in like circumstances, he should be appointed to succeed him. But in this the assassin was, for once, mistaken. For the Army resenting the deed, and being unanimously resolved to chuse an Emperor that should be sure to avenge it, Dioclesian was nominated, and raised to this high dignity, who also failed not instantly to *execute* the task, so justly imposed upon him. In the mean while, Carinus, Carus his eldest son, (who in his Father's life time had been made Cæsar, and after his death had been acknowledged Emperor, as well as his brother Numerien) being still alive, and it being impossible for two independent Emperors, of dispositions like those of these *competitors*, and chose by two different and opposite parties, to subsist long without a trial to supplant each other; we read accordingly, that sometime in the year 285, a very *bloody* battle was fought in Mesia, in which Carinus was killed by one of his own Captains; leaving to Dioclesian, with the throne, the care to finish what still was wanting to settle the peace of the Empire. Nor did Dioclesian, infamous as he was in other respects, disappoint the expectations of the public in regard to his political prudence and valour. For being fully apprized of the *dangers* of the State, with respect to it's neighbours, and of the certainty of being harrassed by *competitors* on every favourable opportunity, he very rightly bethought himself of making an *associate*, that might share with him the fatigues of the Government, and help to secure it's dignity and continuance. In this resolution he came to Rome, A. 286, where he made choice of and nominated Maximien, for his Colleague;

Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

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legue; consigning to him, with the Imperial honours, the management of affairs in the West, whilst he himself should take care of the East. The sequel shewed that, in this matter, Diocletian had judged extremely right. For scarce had this regulation been made, but the Empire was again distracted with *civil* contests, and with *foreign* wars, from the utmost borders of the West to it's furthestmost limits in the East. Carausius began the attack in these Kingdoms: two other Chiefs followed him in Gaul: the *Allemands*, with their numerous associates, did the same, and about the same time, in Austrasia and all along the Rhine: the Sarmatians in Pannonia: the Goths and Visigoths near the Danube, Mesia, and Thrace: the Quinquegentians in Afric: Achilleus in Egypt: and the *Persians* in Mesopotamia and Armenia. What more terrible *havock* this united impression would have made, than it actually did, had not Diocletian by his foresight prevented it, may be judged of, by recollecting; that notwithstanding the hearty and laborious exertions of both the Emperors in their proper districts, and the very great advantages they repeatedly gained over the enemies of the State, as well in the East as in the West, so as to force the Franks and the *Persians* into a peace, and greatly to weaken the *Allemands* and Goths; yet had they so much employment found them by *foreign* enemies during almost *five* years uninterrupted contest, that they had it not in their power to give proper attention or any seasonable checks to the enterprizes of the several *Tyrants* that had seized on Britain, Afric and Egypt. In truth, the defence needful was so very extensive, and the reasons for trusting to the temporary weakness, or stipulated quiet of the nations, bordering on the Empire, were so few and so precarious, that both the Emperors, deeply sensible of their inability to

A. D.
286.

Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.

A. D. 286. serve themselves and their country in an effectual manner, agreed, after mature deliberation, to
 Seal IV. make a further provision for their joint security in
 Rev. vi. the present critical conjuncture, by nominating
 7, 8. each one a Cæsar, that might assist them whenever it should be requisite. This resolution was
 290 taken in the year 290, and executed in March of
 291 the year *following*: when, by incontestable evidences it appears, Diocletian chose Galerius, and Maximien Constantius, under these conditions, that the latter should strive for the recovery of Britain, the former for that of the Eastern Provinces, whilst Maximien should go into Afric, and Diocletian himself into Egypt. What great effects followed hereupon, needs not be recited in detail. It is enough to say, that after great variety of fortune, sundry defeats and as many conquests during *seven* successive years of toil and danger, at last the *four* chiefs succeeded in their several tasks, and happily recovered all the Provinces
 298 the Empire had been deprived of. Indeed the Conquest was so compleat, and the enemies of the State *domestic* and *foreign* were so totally, so effectually subjugated, that the Emperors resolved to have a public sumptuous *triumph* on the occasion; and had it too most certainly, tho' because of the different opinions of Chronologers of the greatest note, it is not easy to say, whether it was in the
 302 year 301, or 2, or 3.—How glorious had it been for these Princes, had they *known, in this their day, the things which belonged unto their peace, before they were hid from their Eyes!* But this they did not. On the contrary, swelled with pride, not irrational only, but impious too (for Diocletian now made himself to be worshipped as God and *first* had his feet kissed) they ventured to contend with the *stone*, which by it's *fall*, it was decreed, should *crush* them. Without figure in the month
 303 of March of the year 303; Diocletian and Maximien,

mien, urged on by Galerius, a monster of barbarity, very weakly as well as wickedly, issued out decrees against the Christians, more extensive and sanguinary than had yet appeared; so most truly letting loose *the savage beasts of the Empire*, tho' not so much to the *real* hurt of those they meant to injure, as to their own present detriment and final destruction. Of this we may assure ourselves by recollecting, that in May of the year 305, Diocletian, sensible of the fruitlessness of the attempt from the inconceivable resolution of the Martyrs, and the visible increase of Christians under the oppression; and not less clearly foreseeing the hazard he ran of losing, with all his glory, the dignity, he was possessed of, and perhaps life itself, if he was any longer concerned in these turbulent, and severe, and on that score unsocial impolitic proceedings; he not only yielded to Galerius his instances for his abdicating the crown, but joined with him in compelling his colleague Maximien, notwithstanding all his unwillingness and renitence, to do the same. By this transaction the Imperial dignity devolved to Galerius and Constantius, the two Cæsars, and with it great relief was vouchsafed to the churches of the Western part of the Empire, which was under the care of the latter by stipulated agreement. Nor was this the only good effect the abdication produced. It was followed with another, which tho' not foreseen, proved however of the utmost importance to the cause of Religion. The incident in view is the flight of Constantine into Britain, which happened the *following* year, and was occasioned by Galerius appointing two Cæsars, Severus and Maximin, (without consulting his colleague Constantius) to the manifest prejudice of Constantine, who by this regulation was deprived of his right to the purple. Galerius his design, undoubtedly, was to

A. D. 303.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7. 8.

305

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A. D. 306. have the *persecution*, which he was barbarously pursuing in the East, as barbarously executed in the West, as soon as Constantius, who now lay dangerously ill, should be taken out of his way. Seal IV. Rev. vi. 7, 8. But in this the Tyrant was greatly disappointed. For Constantine, seeing what was intended, and having besides just reason to fear for his life, quitted Rome in haste, and retired very opportunely into Britain to his Father, then near expiring, by whom, on the 25th of July, he was, with the unanimous consent of the Army, declared Emperor, to the great joy of his subjects and the mighty benefit of the Christian Religion. In the mean while Maxentius resenting it greatly, that his father Maximien should have suffered Galerius to put him by in the late choice of Cæsars, and envying Constantine his elevation to the Imperial dignity, bestirred himself so effectually among the soldiery at Rome that, by their means, he got the same dignity conferred upon him. If any thing, this was the worst incident of the two in respect to Galerius his schemes, as it involved him and the City of Rome into great trouble and a course of bloody *contention*, in which Severus, one of the Cæsars, who was sent to chastise Maxentius, fell ignominiously, succeeded by Licinius. This too followed upon this usurpation, that Maximien, who had abdicated unwillingly, tried by every means in his power to be restored again to the crown, not scrupling, among other devices, to attempt to get his son Maxentius, and the Emperor Constantine likewise, *assassinated*, effectually thus to pave the way to his advancement, tho' in fact it ended in the *loss* of his own life. Nor did Galerius amend the *turbulent* state of affairs by proclaiming Licinius Emperor in Illyricum. On the contrary he, thereby, greatly increased it, as Maximin, who had been Cæsar some years, thought himself so much injured hereby, that he scrupled

scrupled not, of his own authority, to take upon himself the Imperial dignity in the East; the consequence of which was, that he and Maxentius, now rivals, because of Afric which the latter had seized upon, became sworn and very *injurious* enemies to each other. Thus, in the year 310, was the Empire divided between *five* Emperors of equal authority, acting against each other as Usurpers; whilst Rome, besides being distracted with cruel *seditions*, suffered unspeakably from the *tyranny* of Maxentius, and not less from a *famine*, which at this time raged within it's walls. Severe Judgments these! Of which, however, we see and know the cause, by knowing that all this while the Christians were still persecuted with unrelenting fury. Tho' this is remarkable here, that the enemies of the Christian name were induced, from the visible inefficacy of the *slaughter*, they had hitherto fruitlessly pursued, to change that method of Injury to corporal *tortures* only without loss of life; leaving us herein a proof, full as cogent as Diocletian's abdication, that Idolatry lost, and Christianity was gaining ground apace. One may even say, that nothing but a thorough sense of the certain *superiority* of true Religion over every expedient the enemy did invent to bring it low and suppress it, could induce Galerius, soon after this change in the method of persecution, to issue, in the Spring of the year 311, a decree in his and Constantine's name, whereby, according to Eusebius and Lactantius, all edicts against the Christians were repealed. Be that as it will, Christianity stood it's ground undoubtedly, and, by this act of Galerius, got some breathing time: which, however, was but short, since Galerius was no sooner laid in his grave, by an *extraordinary* waste and an excruciating, noisome *corruption* of his whole body, about the month of September of this same year,

A. D.

310.

Seal IV.

Rev. vi.

7, 8.

311

A. D. year, but Maximin and Licinius renewed the per-
 311. secution in the *East* in all the *cruelty* it raged in
 Seal IV. before. Maxentius, it is probable, had done the
 Rev. vi. same in the *West* in the countries under his sway,
 7, 8. had not his *intolerable* deportment at Rome (after
 exciting the citizens to make it their joint request
 to Constantine, that he would come and ease them
 of the *Tyranny*, they groaned under) brought
 312 that Emperor into Italy in the year 312, and forced
 Maxentius to think not of the ruin of others, but
 his own safety; which, however, for all his care,
 he learned by woeful experience, it was decreed
 he should not meet with, when he found his troops
 beat in *every* engagement, and himself obliged, in
 the last trial, on the 24th of September, to fly the
 resentment of the conqueror, only to resign his
 breath to the rapid streams of the Tiber. Con-
 stantine hereupon was received into Rome with the
 greatest expressions of Joy imaginable, and, as
 might well be hoped, failed not among other parts
 of the task Providence had by it's extraordinary fa-
 vours imposed upon him, instantly to provide by
 solemn edicts for the security of the Christians thro'
 all the West, and thro' Afric too, which by his
 conquest was now fallen under his Jurisdiction.
 The East was not included in these Ordinances, as
 it was not, as yet, within the reach of Constantine's
 Empire; and therefore, no wonder Maximin and
 Licinius should have thought themselves authoriz-
 ed, still to pursue their blood-thirsty dispositions
 and practices, notwithstanding all these remarkable
 occurrences: tho', had reason swayed with them, one
 might have imagined, if Constantine's growing pow-
 er was not motive strong enough to check them in
 pursuits so evidently offensive to him, yet the *fa-*
mine and the *plague*, and many other *extraordinary*
 diseases, which, Eusebius notes, then greatly raged
 thro' out that part of the Empire, might have inspired
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them with more moderate resolutions. However, it was not long, before those Regions too were blessed with some *respite* from the extremity of woe they had for full nine years been labouring under. For Constantine, (desirous to break the union between the *two* remaining Tyrants, and by that means to make some further progress towards a general establishment of Christianity, which he nobly and earnestly meditated) submitted, towards the latter end of this year, or rather the beginning of the next, to give his daughter Constantia in marriage to Licinius, engaging him, in return, to join with him in publishing an edict for *liberty* of conscience thro' out his dominions not only, but also in forwarding with him positive orders to Maximin to do the same in the territories subject to his rule. The latter part of this convention Licinius executed as faithfully, as the former; but, as this step highly displeased Maximin, who saw himself forced to do what he from his soul abhorred, it urged the Tyrant treacherously to fall on Licinius's dominions in Illyricum in revenge of the insult. The attempt, however, was unsuccessful. For tho' Maximin got some little advantages at the first onset, yet afterwards was he beat in two several *engagements*, and in the last of them forced to fly to Nicomedia, thence further to Tarsus, where, despairing of finding refuge any where from the conqueror, he took a draught of *poison* (as Dioclesian had done not long before him) which, by slow degrees, and in a most *terrible* manner, at last put an end to his *miserable* life, about August or September of this very year. Thus finished in Nicomedia, where it *first* began, Dioclesian's Persecution *, the *greatest*, the Church ever suffered,

A. D.

312.

Seal IV.

Rev vi.

7, 8.

313

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* If the Reader would see the History of Dioclesian's persecution elegantly represented, he must have recourse to an Oration of Professor

A. D. 313. as well in respect to the unheard of *cruelties* practised, and the infinite *number* of martyrs it produced *, as in respect to it's *duration*: to which Seal IV. only this should be added, that whilst it was carrying on, besides the *intestine* competitions mentioned, and the *revolt* of Alexander in Afric, in the year 306, neither was the Empire free from *foreign* invasions; Constantine having been obliged in the year 307 and 8, and again this very year 313, to march against the *Allemans* and other neighbour nations, that were ravaging Gaul. So that it must be acknowledged, that the *ten* years this persecution lasted, were like the rest of the long period we have been representing under this article, distinguished just as the Prophecy predicted, by *the sword, the famine, the plague, and the ravages of savage, bloody Tyrants and Persecutors*. And is it possible for any one to consider this, and not to suggest on the occasion thus much, that they who lived at the close of this distinguishing interval, (an Interval of 120 years standing) and who had seen in part, or heard from others, the terrible miseries the Empire had been subjected to, and the untimely end, to which every Emperor, above *thirty* in succession, had been brought during this season of Divine Judgments, could not but put to themselves this homely Question: whether, now this scene of woe and *Tyranny* seemed *overpast*, it was the intention of Divine Providence to vouchsafe better times and better administrations? Or in a Christian strain, whether, now that true Religion

feffor Burman; whilst in respect to the Chronology of it, which is very intricate, he should consult Baluz. Misc. T. II. p. 499. sqq. Bishop Pearson and Mr. Dodwell Cyprian. dissert. Paghi in Baron. Tillemont and others.

* In Egypt, only a very small part of the Empire, the number of martyrs amounted to 144,000, Euseb. viii. 1.-17. and de Mart. Palæst. Lactant. c. 7. sqq. Sulpit. Sev. II.

ligion seemed to have triumphed over every obstacle to its full establishment. Heaven designed at this juncture to introduce the long wished for dispensation, and settle it so, as for *the gates of hell* never more to *prevail against* it? This undoubtedly was a most suitable question; and a question, at the same time, which if we know to value the best information, we must rejoice to see stated in the fullest manner, and as fully solved by St. John himself in his next prediction, when he tells us—

And when he had opened the fifth Seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them, that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony, which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the Earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled.

The Altar here spoke of is, without all question, the altar of burnt offerings*: and we know as certainly, that the blood of the beasts to be consumed on this Altar, was expressly enjoin'd to be poured out at the bottom of it†. What we therefore learn immediately is, that the Souls, St. John saw, were the Souls of those, who in a deep and just sense of the validity and acceptableness of the service, had readily submitted to their *bodies* being maimed and their *blood* shed, their persons treated as victims‡, devoted to be *sacrificed*, rather than,

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* Exod. xx. 24. this altar is described; and is there and every where else called *the altar* (See Rev. viii. 3. xi. 1.) whilst the altar, that was in the holiest, is always called the altar of incense, or the golden altar. See Rev. viii. 3. ix. 13.

† Levit iv. 7. viii. 15.

‡ Martyrs are in the New Testament frequently compared to victims and sacrifices. Philpp. ii. 17. 2 Timoth. iv. 6. The same

A. D.
313.Seal IV.
Rev. vi.
7, 8.Seal. V.
Rev. vi.
9, 10, 11.

A. D. in avoidance of these sufferings, not hold* *tena-*
 313. *ciously*, unto the end, their *Testimony* to† and profes-
 Seal V. sion of the Faith, deliver'd to the Saints in *the*
 Rev. vi. *word of God*, the Gospel of Christ‡. They are
 9, 10, 11. indeed Martyrs and Confessors the Vision has a re-
 gard to: Martyrs, however, that were not slain
 within St. John's sight, but that *had been* slain be-
 fore (εσφαγμενων) and of whom the Apostle saw,
 not the shedding of the blood, but the *Souls*||.
 This is a remarkable circumstance, and which it
 concerns us to attend to, as it evidently proves,
 that the persecution, in which these Martyrs suffer-
 ed, was not future, but past. For in every instance,
 we have considered hitherto, and so it will appear
 in every instance that follows, the events yet to
 happen, are always, as it were, acted over and
 brought on upon the scene in all their most essen-
 tial circumstances, that those, that should peruse
 the vision, might find it *plain and run as they read*.
 Thus in the first Prophecy the crown was delivered;
 in the second the sword; in the third the scales were
 carried; and in the fourth Death was empowered to
 kill. Nor are we after this left uninformed in re-
 spect to the distance of time, at which this persecu-
 tion took place. For St. John tells us, he saw
white robes given unto every one of these confessors;
 which in *figure* meaning their admission into the
 sacred *Priesthood*§, and in the *letter* their being ac-
 knowledged

same is observable in the writings of the Fathers. Euseb. Hist.
 Eccles. iv. 15. August. de Civ. D. x. 4.

* Hebr. xii. 28. Rev. xii. 17.

† Rom. x. 9, 10. Rev. i. 9.

‡ Act. iv. 31. vi. 7. viii. 14.

|| It is a pertinent observation of the great Grotius, that souls
 stript of their bodies, are a stronger proof of death having been
 suffer'd, than blood.

§ So the learned Mede and Bawn, de vest. sacerdot. p. 901.
 compare Rev. iii. 4, 5. iv. 4. vii. 13, 14, 15. The worthy
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knownedged *sincere* Christians, we instantly learn from the *close* connexion that subsists between the virtue and its reward in its own nature and in the divine judgment, that these worthy sufferers were but then come out of their tribulation, when the Apostle had their souls represented to him in a vision. In fine being just given to understand by the Confessors *loud cry* for vengeance, that their *numbers* were *great*, and the tortures, they had been racked with, *both unjust* and *insufferable*, the Prophecy proceeds to teach us very clearly, that from this persecution so fully described, to the promised overthrow of the Roman Idolatrous Empire, which the next vision paints in strongest colours, a very short space of time should pass; nay, that that ruin should certainly take place, as soon as *one* more, and consequently the *last* persecution, to be endured under this Empire, should have been gone through, as the rest had been. For, as the question of the Martyrs expressly is, *how long*, how much longer it would be, now their sufferings were ended, and their enemies baffled, before the supreme *Lord** and disposer of all things (*δεσποτης*) would, agreeably to his intrinsic *holiness* and the undoubted *truth* of his promises, *avenge their blood*, by displaying his *Judgments on them that dwelled on the earth*, the inhabitants of the Empire, that had persecuted them †: So is

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A. D.
313.Seal V.
Rev. vi.

9, 10, 11.

Vitranga observes, that among the Persians Kings wore white robes (Esth. vi. 8.) which, if thought to be alluded to, would make the expression of white robes, in its full sense, have a pretty manifest relation to the Royal Priesthood of St. Peter ii. 5, 9. Rev. v. 10. xx. 6.

* This means Christ, Grotius confessing it. See Matth. xxviii. 18. 2. Pet. ii. 1. Rev. iii. 7, 14.

† As the Martyrs ask, when their blood should be avenged, they must be understood to have an eye herein to their persecutors, else the punishment could not be a proper vengeance, nor indeed an act of justice: and if it was on their persecutors, the vengeance was to fall, then the inhabitants of the *earth* must mean

A. D. 313. the answer not less exprefs in refpect to thefe particulars, fince the Martyrs are bid to *reft*, but a *little feafon*, but a little while longer, before their expectation of vengeance and deftruction were fully answered; fo long, till fome few more of *their fellow fervants* (columns and pillars of the Church, as moft of them had been) and fome few more of *their brethren* (Chriftians, tho' of lower rank, yet members of the fame houfehold, and children of the fame Almighty Father) had been *killed* and martyred, as they were, and by this higheft and fureft test of their fincerity had been *fulfilled*, completed, perfected, fo as to be in no part of their appointed task * deficient, nor lefs fit than the beft of their fellows, *to be enrolled among the general afsembly and church of the firft born, among the fpirits of juft men made perfect*†.

How very exactly the feveral particulars contained in the *former* part of this Prediction have been accomplished in Diocleſian's *ten* years fevere perfecution ‡, is abundantly clear from the accounts, that

mean the inhabitants of the Empire, as they only had exerciſed their cruelties on thefe Martyrs. So that this is another plain proof, that the earth, in this firft claſs of Prophecies means the Empire. See Seal II note (†) p. 24.

* Luke ix 31. xii 50. Vitringa and Wetſtein.

† Hebr. xii 23.

‡ Should it be ſuggeſted, that the Martyrs of this viſion include the whole number of them, ſince the riſe of Chriſtianity, and ſo ought not to be underſtood only of thoſe that fell in Diocleſian's perfecution; it ſhould be obſerved, that this ſurmiſe cannot be well founded; becauſe it involves this abſurdity, that till now none of the Martyrs had received white robes, none been approved or rewarded; when yet in the preſent caſe, the virtue and the reward are indiffolubly connected; as indiffolubly, as Martyrdom proves the Chriſtian ſincere. Eſides it ſhould be noted, that when we meet with a general muſter of the Martyrs, (as we do c. vii. 9, ſeq.) we ſee them not receiving, but cloathed in white robes; and that ſuch a muſter, when according to the Prophecy another perfecution was to follow, is highly unfuitable. In ſine it ſhould be remembered, that the Martyrs of this viſion

are

that end the History of the preceding Prophecy. A. D. 313.
 Nor is there room to doubt, at the same time, but that, as this accomplishment must needs appear incontestable, it will be readily granted, in virtue of St. John's declarations in the Visions we are upon, 9, 10, 11, that that *bloody* persecution ought not to be placed within the present, but at the close of the former period, as has been done in our state of the matter. In the mean while, tho' this severest trial of the Church was happily ended by the *extraordinary* deaths of *all* the Tyrants that had been concerned in it; all but *one*, and he (Licinius) now seemingly disposed to become a zealous friend, by reason of his marriage with Constantine's daughter, and because of his ample edict* in favour of the Christians, published at Nicomedia immediately upon his conquest over Maximin in the year 313: yet since Licinius, for all these plausible appearances, was still a person upon whose favour, because of his former conduct, no absolute reliance could be placed; and since it was notorious besides, that, not

are the Martyrs that fell within the Empire; that they ask vengeance on the Empire; and that it was the Empire indeed, on which the desired judgment was executed. On the other hand, if it be argued, that because it is but to one single persecution the Martyrs here spoke of manifestly belong, it is therefore also right to explain this whole Prophecy, as relating in both its parts to one only persecution, and to that of Dioclesian in particular; it is answered, that then St. John had been made to see in the first part of the prediction, not the souls of Martyrs under the altar stript of their bodies, but their bodies maimed, and themselves slaughtered near the altar, to denote a present action and the connection of it with what was to follow. As it is, the natural inference is, that the prediction refers to two persecutions, the one past, the other yet to come, though at no great distance from the former. And it is observable, in particular, that Dioclesian's persecution cannot possibly take in both parts of the prediction, because it was not followed with the overthrow of the idolatrous Empire, which yet the Prophecy asserts here, should succeed upon its accomplishment.

* Euseb. x. 5. Lactant. c. 48.

A. D. 313. notwithstanding Constantine's power and successes no greater benefit had yet been obtained in favour of Christianity, than barely that *toleration* of it, which Tiberius*, Hadrian†, and others‡, tho' Seal V. Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. ineffectually, had long before attempted to procure it. It is evident, that nothing could well be more suitable to the state of affairs in the Empire at this juncture, than to represent the Martyrs, in the vision we are upon, as fluctuating between hope and fear; as tossed between the pleasing thought of the near approach, and the very anxious apprehension of the yet longer distance, of that happiness they had been instructed on good grounds to believe, and were then expecting, would prevail, thro' the destruction of Idolatry, and the establishment of the Gospel within the Empire. *How long, say they, and say it well; How long, O Lord holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* Without figure, it may be averr'd, that the Confessors *alive* in those days, could not but be, as the vision represents them in their fellow sufferers the Martyrs, eagerly impatient under their leisurely advances, or more than that, disturbed at the precariousness of their acquisitions: especially, when (A. 314.) not many months after they had began to breath a less noxious air, and to enjoy a less dangerous situation, than what the Dens and Mines, the woods and caves, they before were confined to, had afforded them; they had the mortification to observe fresh troubles to arise, where they had flattered themselves none could, between Constantine and Licinius namely; occasioned, as Historians tells us, by the

314.

* Tertull. Apol. c. 5.

† Hist. Aug. Script p. 129.

‡ Euseb. iv. 26. of Antonine; of Aurelius, Euseb. v. 5. of Alexander Hist. Aug. Script. p. 129. of Philip. Euseb. vi. 36. See also le Christianisme de L'Empereur Philippe, par Th. Delafaye, and of Gallien, Euseb. vii. 13.

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the latter's pretending to appropriate to himself the Eastern parts of the Empire (over and above the territories, he already possessed in Illyricum) because of his conquest over Maximin, and the death of the Tyrant not long after: and though we find, that upon two battles fought, the one in Pannonia, the other in Thrace, both to the disadvantage of the usurper, matters were adjusted by a Treaty, in which Constantine, notwithstanding his superiority, amply displayed his great moderation; yet does history give us sufficiently to understand, that from this time forward, a good harmony between the two Emperors was never more restored, nor the territories in Illyricum and Macedonia, resigned by Licinius to Constantine, ever looked upon by the former, but with a most envious eye. The greater power of Constantine, as oldest Emperor and most beloved, and his uninterrupted successes against all that ever strove with him for mastery, one may well suggest, were the political, and the only motives, that kept Licinius, for a while, for some three or four years, (for *a little season*) from an open rupture with him; grieved as Licinius was at the heart, and displeased with his late forced submissions. But as these prudential considerations could in their own nature have their effect no longer, than the circumstances of times made them necessary; so do we find, in fact, that no sooner was Constantine engaged in a war with the Sarmatæ, or Poles, in the year 319, but Licinius immediately discovered the rancour of his heart, by expelling all Christians out of his court, and openly declaring for Heathenism. In the year *following*, the Tyrant did worse, publishing now his severe *sanguinary* decrees, in virtue of which great numbers were tortured and murdered in the several parts of his Empire. Constantine, in the mean while, being still employed in repressing the Poles,

A. D.

314.

Seal V.

Rev. vii.

9, 10, 11.

319.

320.

A. D. 320. could no further try to stop these iniquitous proceedings, than as he did, by reminding Licinius of the solemn decrees that had been issued by them in support of the Christians, and of the articles of the treaty lately concluded. And no doubt, but that, with a *real* Christian, (such as the learned Paghi fancies Licinius to have been, notwithstanding Cardinal Norris's solid suspicions to the contrary) arguments of this kind, pressed by one, to whom the Tyrant had so great obligations, could not but have had their intended effect. Nay, even in a mere political view, it is not at all improbable, Licinius might, had he pleased to remit of his severities, have obtained some advantages from Constantine in his present situation, disposed, as that great Prince ever appeared, to sacrifice his private interests to the good of the public, and of the Christian Religion in particular. Be that as it will, certain it is, that Licinius turned a deaf ear to all Constantine's remonstrances, and that he continued uninterruptedly, and with a fury not inferior to that of his predecessors, to persecute the poor Christians, all the while Constantine was, through his engagements elsewhere, prevented from forcing the Tyrant into a more rational and humane behaviour. The time however at last came, when, through the blessing of Providence on Constantine's arms, the Poles were subdued, and compelled to agree to a peace: which happy incident of the year 322, as it might well be expected, Constantine failed not immediately to improve, to the benefit of the Empire and the good of religion. He gathered together his forces in Macedonia, this very year, whilst Licinius did the same in Thrace, and sent for his son Crispus out of Gaul, to serve under him in this war. By the spring *following*, all things were ready for the important expedition, so as that Constantine was able to march 120,000 foot and 10,000 horse against

322.

323.

against Licinius, who had 150,000 of the former, A. D. 323. and 15,000 of the latter. The armies met near Adrianople in Thrace, and fought on the third of July, when Licinius being beat, and 30,000 of his troops killed on the spot, he fled to Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople, and thence into Asia, to avoid falling into the hands of those that pursued him. Here Licinius created Martinian Cæsar, to assist him in the recovery of what he had lost, or at least in the defence of what he still possessed of the Eastern part of the Empire; which most probably he had not been suffered to do, nor yet to collect his scattered troops and repair his army, had not Constantine been willing to give him full scope for amendment, or rather had he not been obliged to send some of his forces against the Goths, who had taken the opportunity of the defenceless state the borders of Thrace were in, to invade and ravage it at this time. This cross incident, however, served no other purpose, than to render Licinius's ruin more certain, and Constantine's Victory more compleat. For Licinius, yet thinking himself able to stand his ground, and to venture on a second battle, near Chalcedon in Bythinia, had the mortification to see scarce 30,000 men left, out of 130,000 he brought into the field, and himself, upon being taken prisoner in Nicomedia his capital, reduced to implore the Conqueror's mercy, which he with difficulty obtained, at the intercession of his wife, Constantine's daughter, and not unless agreeing to retire to Thessalonica, without having any thing further to do with the Empire in any respect. This memorable event happened in the spring of the year 324: and the consequence of it was, that all Christian exiles were recalled; they that had been condemned to the mines, set at liberty; honours and estates restored to those that had been deprived of them; Churches,

A. D. ches, that had been damaged or pulled down,
 324. ordered to be repaired or rebuilt; and at last, in the
 Seal V. month of June, edicts published, by which all Li-
 Rev. vi. cinius's cruel ordinances against the Christians were
 9, 10, 11. totally abrogated. So that, as thus Licinius's per-
 secution, the *last* the Church endured under the
 Roman Heathen Empire, was happily ended, after
 it had raged about *five* years, and after little more
 than *ten* years had passed since Dioclesian's cruelties
 and those of his associates had been put a stop to,
 it may be safely submitted to all fair reasoners to
 determine; whether it was not with truth and pro-
 priety, the Martyrs, in the vision hitherto illustrated,
 were told, it should be but *a little season* to the ruin
 of the Roman Heathen Empire; and whether it
 was not with as great truth these same Martyrs were
 informed, in the same breath, that the ruin they
 expected, should be immediately preceeded by *one*
 more and the *last* persecution, Christians should be
 subjected to from that quarter. Indeed this is all
 plain demonstration; these facts such, as cannot be
 disproved by the most litigious; especially, since in
 the last vision of the class now under considera-
 tion, our sacred Author proceeds to inform us,

Seal VI. *And I beheld when he had opened the Sixth Seal,*
 Rev. vi. *and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the Sun be-*
 12,—17. *came black as sackcloth of hair, and the Moon became*
as blood, and the Stars of heaven fell unto the earth,
even as a figtree casteth her untimely figs, when she
is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven depart-
ed, as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every
mountain and Island, were moved out of their places:
and the kings of the earth, and the great men,
and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the
mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman
hid themselves in the dens, and in the caverns of the
mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall
on us, and hide us from the face of him, that sitteth
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on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? A. D. 324.

As in the close of this Vision it is expressly declared, that the period to which it belongs, would prove a day of *wrath*, and it is added, that now *was come the great day of the Lamb's wrath**, we are evidently carried back to the former Prophecy, where the martyrs enquire after this time of *vengeance*, and are bid to stay for it but *a little season*: and consequently, there can be no manner of doubt, but the severe dispensations of this interval were to be displayed on the Roman heathen Empire; as it was under that Empire only (strictly speaking) Christians hitherto had suffered persecution; and it was precisely with respect to that Empire, (*the inhabitants of the earth, of the land*, they had suffered in) the martyrs humbly requested to know the divine resolves.—This being so extremely clear, our next business is to attend to the nature of the Judgments themselves, which, after due recollection, cannot but be full as easily understood, as the determined objects on which they are to fall. For, as it is scarce possible to suppose any one, that is in earnest and free from prepossessions; any one, that is acquainted with the figurative stile of the book, and with the language of the Prophets; should be tempted to interpret the *earthquake* here spoke of, in a strict and *literal* sense (conscious at the same time of the inconceivable absurdities, he must necessarily be forced to maintain in his *literal* construction of the remaining figures of this Vision) it may be

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reasonably

* That the great day of wrath here mentioned may not be understood of the day of Judgment, it will be of use to observe, that this expression is as often employed to denote particular visitations, as that general one, *Isaiah xiii 9. Zeph. i. 14, 15.* and elsewhere.

Seal VI.
Rev vi.
12,—17.

A. D. reasonably inferred, to be plainly and universally
 324. apprehended, that by this *earthquake* it was intend-
 Seal VI. ed to inform us, a *great* and remarkable *Revolu-*
 Rev. vi. *tion* should, at this time, happen in the Roman
 12,—17. heathen Empire; a revolution attended with in-
 cidents and alterations of the State not less unex-
 pected, sensible, and fearful, than those observ-
 able, when nature is convulsed by a *great*, tremen-
 dous shaking of the real Earth. There are innu-
 merable passages in the ancient Prophecies, that
 confirm this interpretation, which it would be te-
 dious to recite*; but for the decisiveness of it, it
 • may be of service to set down the following one of
 the Prophet Haggai (ii. 21.) cited and explained
 by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 27.)
 where, after God declares, *I will shake the heavens*
and the earth, it is immediately added, (as setting
 forth the precise sense of this declaration) *And I*
will overthrow the throne of Kingdoms, and I will
destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the Heathen,
and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride
in them, and the horses and their riders shall come
down, every one by the sword of his brother.—In the
 mean while, that we might not be under the least un-
 certainty in this matter, nor left to collect else-
 where what might be deemed included in this
general information, the Prophecy kindly proceeds
 to enumerate, in very natural and due gradation,
 the several *particulars*, in which, the revolution
 predicted should be rendered conspicuous. The
 first is, that *the Sun should become black as sackcloth*
of hair; the whole Moon (for so the manuscripts
 read) *become red as blood* (so should this be sup-
 plied;) *and the Stars of heaven fall unto the earth.*
 That is, Governors of every kind, and of every
 rank,

* See Isaiah xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31. Matth.
 xxiv. 29.

rank, Civil and Religious, Supreme and inferior, A. D. should be dispossessed of all their power and influence, as totally, as are Sun and Moon, when in Eclipse, and Stars, (or meteors formed in a convulsed atmosphere) when seen to precipitate from the upper into these nether regions. This sense is founded not barely on the necessity of rendering all the parts of this Prophecy consistent, but besides on the plain and acknowledged language of the Prophets. Thus, not to mention other instances, the Prophet Isaiah (lx. 19, 20.) speaking of the latter times, after having informed the Church, that *the Gentiles should come to her light and kings to the brightness of her rising*, he adds this comfortable promise, *The Sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the Moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy Sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy Moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

Where the different states of the Jewish and Christian church, so elegantly described, make it exceedingly plain, that by *Sun* and *Moon* must be understood that *Kingly* and *Priestly* government, the Church was under, and had seen and should see the destruction of, whilst Jewish; but which it should be delivered from, and have changed into a more glorious and lasting administration, when it should become Christian. Thus further, whilst on one hand Antiochus (Dan. viii. 10.) is said to magnify himself *against the Prince of the host, and of the Stars*, that is, the rulers of the Jewish State, the Maccabees; and *the Stars* in Christ's hand (Rev. i. 20.) are expressly said to mean *the Angels* or *Bishops of the churches*, just as the twelve Apostles are represented (Rev. xii. 1.) by twelve Stars: We see on the other hand, *Sun, Moon, and Stars* in Joseph's dream (Genes. xxxvii. 9.) applied to his Father, mother,

A. D. mother and brethern; as governing the family,
 324. their Kingdom, in due subordination, and cer-
 Scal VI. tainly not without regard to every kind of want in
 Rev. vi. it, whether temporal or spiritual.—But then, as a
 12,—17. revolution consisting only in a removal of the
 superior and inferior *Luminaries* of the State, the
 Civil and Ecclesiastical Governors of it (which is
 all we have hitherto learned) might have been
 taken to infer no more, than a *temporary* occasional
suspension of, or *interruption* in the Government of
 the Empire, and might not have been thought
 sufficient to denote the final irrecoverable *subver-*
sion of it; for this reason the Prophecy has care-
 fully added in it's *next* degree, that *the Heaven*
should depart as a scroll, when it is rolled together.
 For the *Supreme Government*, established in the
 fundamental Laws and Constitutions of a State,
 being in nature and scripture language to govern-
 ing and governed, just what the *heavens* are to the
Earth, in superiority and influence; the *departure*
 of that heaven out of *view* as fully, as the inside
 writing of a *scroll*, when it is *rolled together*, must
 needs imply the *total* dissolution of that State, to
 which such revolution is applicable. And of course
 it must be allowed that, in this circumstance, we
 are taught a great deal more than had yet been
 expressed; and particularly, that not only Gover-
 nors of every kind and degree, exercising their
 respective authority in the Empire, should be de-
 prived of such their authority, but the very fun-
 damental regulations, by which that authority
 had hitherto been squared and directed, should be
 wholly taken away and annulled, so as by inevi-
 table consequence to bring on an essential change
 in the Empire itself, such as would be equal to it's
 subversion and absolute non-existence in respect to
 it's former constitution. If it be doubted, whether
 in the Scriptures, the *Heaven* of a State means it's

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Supreme government with the constitutional regulations, on which it is founded, we need but look back to the passage of Haggai, above recited, where the *throne* and *strength* of Kingdoms manifestly answers to their *Heaven*: to which it may not be useless to add, that, when in the Prophet Isaiah (li. 16.) the *establishment* of the Kingdom of the Messiah is predicted, this dispensation is expressly described by *planting the Heavens and laying the foundations of it*; just as the future removal of all unchristian Laws and administrations is, both by Jewish and Christian Prophets, intimated very plainly in that repeated promise of theirs, of *a new Heaven and a new Earth** taking place in the latter days. There is a *third* particular, the Prophecy before us has thought proper to inform us of, still to improve and confirm our notion of a total dissolution of the Roman *beaten* Empire, and that is, that *every mountain and island should be moved out of their places*. In the account of the destruction of modern Babylon, or Rome Antichristian, mentioned by St. John, below (xvi. 20.) we read, among other particulars of her judgment, that *every Island fled away, and the mountains were not found*. This is a remarkable difference of expression; which can teach us no less, than that the Mountains and Islands were not in the present case totally to *subside*, as when Babylon should be *shaken* and destroyed, but only to be *moved out of their places*, subjected to such a change of condition, as should alter the *foundations* they stood upon, and their *relations* to, and *connexions* with, the things around them. And accordingly, as it is unquestionable that in the figurative stile of the Prophets *mountains*† mean great

* Isaiah lxxv. 17. lxxvi. 22. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1.

† Ps. xxx. 8. lxxvi. 5. Isaiah xli. 5. Jerem. li. 25. Habb. iii. 6. Zach. vi. 7.

A. D.
384.

Seal VI.
Rev. vi.
12.—17.

A. D. great and inland Kingdoms, and *Islands** lesser,
 325. distinct, and maritime communities, we are very
 Seal VI. readily induced to imagine this incident should
 Rev. vi imply, that monarchies tributary to, and the
 12,—17. several Provinces and free Cities immediately
 dependent upon the Empire, should, when this
 revolution came to take place, either of them-
 selves cancel their engagements to the old forms
 of it, with all the several connexions they led to,
 by relinquishing it's Idolatry and Idolatrous Or-
 dinances; or else, in punishment for their stub-
 born adherence to it's antiquated regulations, be
 deprived of all their power and distinguishing
 privileges, by being made to pass thro' several
 gradual impairments thereof, and at last into
 different hands and different connexions.—In
 fine, to make us sensible of the very *dreadful* and
ruinous circumstances, which the mighty revolu-
 tion, here predicted, should, as it went on, be at-
 tended with, we are told, that then should they
 of all *ranks* and *professions*, that were *enemies* to the
 new system, and saw and had reason to fear the
vengeance of Heaven for their past barbarities or
 present stubbornness, not only endeavour, by me-
 thods as promising as *mountains and rocks* in an
 Earthquake†, to shelter themselves against the
 evils, they should be exposed to; but finding these
 expedients ineffectual, and themselves unable,
 maugre all their precaution, to escape the
 close pursuit and fatal reach of the dreaded
 misfortunes, should in despair and a thorough
 distraction of their minds, with the very means
 they had relied on for their safety, to prove the
 instruments of their destruction; or as St. John
 himself explains it (ix. 6.) *should seek death, but*
should

* Isaiah xx. 6. Jerem. xxv. 22. Zeph. ii. 11.

† Isaiah ii. 19, 21. Hos x. 8. Luke xxiii. 30.

should not find it; should desire to die, but death should flee from them. A. D. 325.

To shew this Revolution in the Roman *beathen* Empire to have indeed taken place in all the circumstances of description, with which we observe it predicted in the Prophecy before us, this would carry us into the History of very many ages downwards, and would particularly oblige to a recital of the sundry dreadful ravages that were committed and alterations, that were introduced successively by the Goths, Huns, Heruli, Saracens, and Turks, all of them very carefully and fully set down for our information in the next Class of Predictions, St. John has favoured us with. Such proof therefore, it may be justly said, it would be as impertinent to undertake to give in here, as it would be unreasonable any in one to expect it should. Yet this may, and must be said on this occasion, that within this present interval, which confessedly takes in the memorable reign, (the proper *Monarchy*) of the great Constantine, the *foundations* were laid, and some *samples* given of all those mighty changes, that afterwards were more *fully* introduced. Indeed who so short sighted as not to discover the *Sun, Moon and Stars*, the *great Luminaries* and *inferior* constellations of the Roman *beathen* Empire respectively *eclipsed* and brought *down* by the Event, which our connexion regularly calls upon us to specify in this place? The event in view, is that which happened in the year 325, when Licinius (whom we left a prisoner at large in Thessalonica) for his secret treacherous practices, and mutinous attempts to recover the power he had resigned to save his life, was seized by Constantine's order, and condemned to be strangled, with Martinian, whom he had created Cæsar, and all others his adherents. In this fall of Licinius, the *Sun* of the Roman *beathen* Em-

Seal VI.
Rev. vi.
12-17.

325

A. D. 325. pire suffered undoubtedly a *total* obscuration, as he was the *last* of the Emperors, that had endeavoured to support Heathenism within it's Verge; and the *Moon* of the same Empire not less certainly became *deeply* affected, in all it's *latitude*, thro' this incident, when Licinius, as *High Pontiff* in virtue of his Imperial dignity, could not possibly undergo so dismal a catastrophe, as we know he did, without involving the *Ecclesiastical* establishments of the State into like ruin and destruction *. Here then is incontestable evidence of the truth of St. John's prediction, in respect to these particulars: and as to the *fall of Stars*, that too we see verified in the death of Martinian, whose *dignity* and power in the State were, by his being a Cæsar, *next* to the Imperial. Or if more be required in regard to this last circumstance, let us remember, that, as Eusebius informs us †, no sooner was Constantine in possession of the *Eastern*, as well as the Western part of the Empire, but he sent Christian *Governors*, of all ranks, into the Provinces, forbidding those of a different profession, that were continued, to offer sacrifices. This being so, one might venture to affirm, without being thought to stretch matters, that the Political
Sun,

■* In the Roman State the High Pontificat exercised it's power over all Priestly Colleges and Religious Officers whatever, thro'out it's extent; and whilst the Republick remained free, it was so far independent on the Senate and people, that no appeal could be made from it's decisions. When the Emperors seized on the Civil power, they also seized on the Pontifical dignity and privileges, more politic than to trust so great Jurisdiction into any hands but their own. Tacit, Ann. III. 58. Accordingly as soon, as the Heathen Emperors were put an end to, the heathen high priesthood fell of course in like manner, and so with it the whole Religious fabric of Heathenism in the Roman Empire being deprived of it's animating principle by losing it's head, it must needs be understood to have received it's death's wound.

† De Vit. Const. iii. 44.

Sun, Moon, and Stars of the Heathen Roman Empire having been thus effectually put an end to, the *heaven* of that State could not but disappear and vanish with them. However, not to give room for suspecting deficiencies, it may be added, that by the first Laws*, Constantine made, after he became sole Emperor, he expressly forbid the erecting of Statues to any false Deities, and the practice of all kind of divinations, in private houses, with the sacrifices that used to attend them; after which he issued other ordinances, *three* in number, still to be found in the Code, that positively enjoined the destruction of all Heathen Temples, depriving them, at the same time, of all their possessions and revenues†. And what more remained to be done, to compleat the mighty revolution of these days? Nothing, absolutely, but the removal of *mountains* and *islands*, Kingdoms and separate States, out of their present situations and connexions, and acting towards the *stubborn* enemies of the new system, so as to strike them with *fear* and despair. But who, that knows any thing of the great Constantine's mild and benevolent character, will expect from him proceedings *equal* to what these transactions may be deemed to imply? Or who, that can guess at what would have been required *fully* to produce these effects, can be inclined to look for them, either in Constantine's critical situation, at this time, or the few years he lived after his possession of the whole Empire? Yet, even under him, and during this short interval; some things happened, no further distant from the mark, than as they were brought on without bloodshed, and without any dismemberment of the State; both which were in a short time

A. D. 325.

Seal VI.
Rev. vi.
12—17.

325, 6, 7.

M 2

after

* Euseb. de vit. Const. c. 45,

† Pagh. ad A. 333. §. 4.

A. D. after most plentifully administred by other hands.
 330. For *now* it was, that after new modelling the
 Seal VI. City and Magistracy of *Byzantium*, and after a
 Rev. vi. total clearance of all Idolatrous practices within
 12-17. it's-walls *, Constantine not only raised that City to
 the honour of bearing his name, but carried
 thither the *seat* of Empire from *Rome*, whose se-
 ditions and stubborn dispositions were not a little
 humbled hereby, and whose dignity, hitherto unri-
 valed, was, by this unexpected transfer, *moved* in-
 deed *out of it's place*. It was now, too, Constantine
 made a new division of the whole Empire, into
 332 *four* large districts, placing in each of them a
 Vicar or Viceroy, with supreme power over
 every other Provincial Magistrate; by which re-
 gulation, says Zosimus, in exprefs terms, *things*
well constituted were moved out of their place†. It
 may be mentioned likewise, that at this time some
 very obscure *villages* ‡ were raised to the high rank
 of *Cities*, and Episcopal Cities, with titles borrow-
 ed from Constantine's family, for their generous
 conduct in destroying, of their own accord, the Idols
 and Idol Temples within their limits, and coming
 over to the faith and profession of Christianity; in
 respect to which incident it should be especially
 observed, that among these Cities, Eusebius par-
 ticularly mentions *Gaza* or *Constantia*, which was
 an *Island* or maritime Town; and *Constantina*, a
 City of Phænice, a *maritime* Province. After this
 it should be noted, still further, that Constantine
 being very desirous to establish Christianity thro'
 out the Empire, sent some of his most trusty coun-
 sellors into the several Provinces of it, with posi-
 tive orders, not only to raise Temples every where
 (among

* Euseb. vit. Const. iii. 48.

† Pagh. Ann. 332. §. 4.

‡ Euseb. vit. Const. iv. 38, 39. Zosom. ii. 5.

among which those built by Constantine and Helena at Jerusalem, the Capital of Judæa, and at Bethlehem, and in mount Olivet*, those erected at Diocesarea, Tiberias, Nazareth, and Capernaum by Joseph†, a Patriarch among the Jews, in virtue of a commission granted him, upon his conversion, by the Emperor, should not be forgot) but more than that, to draw forth out of their most secret recesses all Idols whatever, and to uncover and strip them before the people; which Eusebius expressly tells us, was done without any violence on the side of the commissioners, or any resistance on the side of the people, for *fear of worse*, as Zosomen adds, tho' not without exposing the Priests to *great shame and laughter*‡: not less certain is it, that wherever Constantine knew of any infamous rites being practised in religious worship to the Idols of the place, he failed not to order those Idols and the Temples belonging to them to be totally destroyed, with express notice to the Priests and people, that if any should, after this, presume to return to the like iniquities, they should be *punished*|| with the utmost rigour and severity; the consequence of which was, as Eusebius§ expresses it, *that they, who hitherto had been addicted to these lascivious rites, being frightened by the Emperor's threats, learned to behave more modestly*. In fine, it was at this time, Armenia**, Iberia††, India|||, or rather Æthiopia, Mountains or

* Euseb. vit. Const. iii. 25, 41.

† Baron. ad A. 327. §. 17. Basnage Hist. des Juifs, vi. 14. §. 4.

‡ Euseb. vit. Const. iii. 54. & de laud. Const. c. 8. p. 736.
edit. Read. Zosom. ii. 5.

|| Euseb. vit. Const. iii. 52, 56. 59. iv. 25.

§ De laud. Const. c. 8. p. 736.

** Baron. ad A. 311. §. 27.

†† Baron. ad A. 327. §. 11.

||| Baron. l. c. §. 8. Pagh, ad A. 327. §. 8. Ludolf. Hist. Æth. iii. 2.

A. D.
332.

Seal VI.
Rev. vi.
12—17.

A. D. 332. or Kingdoms within the Verge of the Imperial sway, were all of them fully converted to the Christian Faith, and thereby as necessarily released from their engagements with the Heathen States, that surrounded them, as their connexions with the Empire became more intimate and lasting; besides which, it is peculiarly to be remarked, that the Sarmatæ or Poles (whom Constantine had subdued just before his contests with Licinius, and whom since that, A. 332, as an associate *mountain* or nation, he had, upon their earnest entreaties, succoured against the Goths, that had invaded them) being, A. 334, *moved out of their place*, or expelled out of their country by the slaves they kept in readiness for the defence of the Romans, against the Goths, were to the number of more than 300,000 of them, received by Constantine into the Empire, and *placed* in the different Provinces of Thrace, Scythia, Macedonia, and Italy*.

334

It is then clear as the noon day, that the predicted revolution did, in very truth, take place in all its circumstances as far, as the times would admit of it, or could possibly be expected. Nay, it may even be said, that this important business succeeded greatly beyond what any one, that knew to weigh circumstances, could well have thought. For that an Empire extended, as was the Roman; that an Empire, like that, beset with formidable enemies on every side; that an Empire containing within its Provinces, as that undoubtedly did, many and many great Personages, whose Ancestors had, by intrusion, or right been possessed of the Imperial dignity, and therefore could not be in want of sufficient grounds to justify a competition; that an Empire, whose power and government, as in the Roman at this time, were still in a very great measure lodged in the hands of doubtful friends or determined enemies to the new system; in fine, that an Empire, whose inhabitants,

* Pagh. ad A. 334. §. 5.

inhabitants, as they had been taught to adscribe all their misfortunes to those that now were to be their masters, had also on that account, and because of the intrinsic inconsistency of the two Religions, conceived the most resolute averfions against them; at the same time, that they yet must have been the majority, and not under any great reason to fear their adversaries on the score of their unanimity and consequent strength*: that an Empire so constituted should, without any remarkable convulsion any where, have yielded up, as it were, at once, and certainly within little more than *ten* years, all its evil pretensions and religious rights to the absolute disposal of one Prince, confessedly bent on the subversion of both; when for near 150 years past the spirit of contest had run so high, as scarce to have been bridled; by two, or three, or even four Emperors, exerting, at a time, all their power in their peculiar districts, to the manifest support of the established privileges and customs; this must needs have appeared then, and must now appear, extraordinarily marvellous in the eyes of those that will consider it; and is indeed a revolution, not to be accounted for upon the bare foot of reason, but must be wholly adscribed to the absolute interposition of God's Almighty Providence, in just conformity to what our sacred author teaches, when he is pleased to add.

And after these things I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the

* The unanimity of the Christians, at this time, was undoubtedly very slender, when besides the remains of several proscribed sects, it is notorious the Melitians and Arians were both of them, at this very time, very busy in sowing the seeds of discord, wherever they had any influence, and as far as they durst.

A. D.
334.

Seal VI.
Rev. vi.
12—17.

Appen-
dage.
Rev. vii.
1—8,

A. D. *the four Angels, to whom it was given to hurt the*
 335. *earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither*
 Seal VI. *the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants*
 Rev. vii. *of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number*
 1—8. *of them, which were sealed; and there were sealed an*
hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of
the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were
sealed twelve thousand, &c.

Winds, stormy winds, that *hurt* or *injure*, where they *blow*, being allowed emblems of *wars**, domestic or foreign; and these being expressly forbid to be let loose, either *on earth*, or *sea*, or *trees*, in any of the *four corners*† or *quarters of the Earth*; we learn immediately, not only that all wars are under the *absolute* controul of the Almighty, but that, in the present case, though wars were *ready* to assail the *Earth* or *Empire*, yet were they providentially withheld from injuring, in any way and in any part of its whole extent, its *earth* or *sea*, its *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil* policy; with a peculiar regard and perfect safety to the *Trees*, or chief *Governors*‡ in either. Unquestionably, after what has been observed on the second, fourth, fifth and sixth Seals, no one will venture to deny, that the *earth* here, as in all the other instances mentioned, must mean the *Empire*, then indeed the *chief* part of the habitable earth, and commonly called *the world*, by those that lived under it||: and when that earth has an *earth* distinct from, and surrounded, we may say, by a *sea*, as our earth is, where can we look for

* Jerem. iv. 12. xviii. 17. xlix. 36. li. 1, 11. Ezek. xiii. 13. Hof. xiii. 15.

† Ezek. vii. 2. Jerem. xlix. 36. Dan. vii. 2. Ezek. vi. 5.

‡ Ezek. xvii. 24. xxi. 10. xxxi. 3, 4, 5, 14. Dan. iv. 20. Isa. x. 19. Math. iii. 10.

|| It may not be improper to note here, that the Babylonian Empire is, as the Roman, called the *Earth*, the whole earth, the *World*. Isa. xiii. 5, 9, 11. Dan. iv. 1. vi. 25. See Seal II. note (†) p. 24.

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lx. 5
Dan.

for the *truth* of these *figures*, but in the more *solid* and *stable* establishments of *Religion*, as particularly enclosed, by and within the necessary and *civil*, tho' too variable prescriptions of the State. Or to view this point by inversion, who, that allows that St John (xvii. 15.) appoints *waters* to signify *nations and people*, and that a *collection* of such waters cannot therefore but make a political *Sea* or Empire*, can be at a loss to see, that the *earth*, which such a *sea* encloses and is connected with, cannot possibly be understood of any thing else, but of the *religious* appointments within the compass of that *sea* or Empire, which, for their *cohesion* and great *resistance* against all outward impressions are rightly compared to the *earth*; whilst the *civil* regulations of the state, by being in a continual *flux*, and liable to be affected occasionally by great *swells* and *convulsions*, must be owned as rightly compared to the ever *troubled* waters of the *ocean*. In truth, when these circumstances are duly weighed, and it is with all care remembered, that the *trees* belonging to this *Earth* and *Sea*, and here expressly forbid to be injured, are, by St. John's own interpretation (ix. 4.) *figurative* trees, inasmuch as they stand for *men that had the seal of God in their foreheads*, it may be presumed, nothing can well settle more fully the interpretation here offered, than these remarks. Tho' this it may not be improper to add hereto, that as no true *earth*, no truly *religious* establishment, no true *Church* of God, had been till now encompassed, and as it were, *embraced* by the *Sea* or *civil* regulations of the Empire, and therefore neither *Sea* nor *earth*, as relatives to each other, are hinted at in the several Prophecies, we have taken a view of; so on the contrary shall we meet from this time forward

N

with

* The word *sea* is used for a great collection of nations. Isa. lx. 5. Ezek. xxxi. 4. and the great Sea, for the whole Earth Dan. vii. 2, 3, 17.

A. D.

334.

Seal VI.

Rev. vii.

1-8.

A. D. 334. with repeated mention of this *earth* and this *sea*,
 Seal VI. here put upon these emblems; which cannot but
 Rev. vii. confirm and in a manner demonstrate, that *earth*
 1-8. and *sea*, as we here argue, must needs denote what
 in common discourse, we intend to express, by
Church and State.—With confidence, accordingly,
 may it be repeated, that agreeably to the clear pur-
 port of this Prophecy, a profound *calm*, securing
 every essential concern of the Empire, through the
 whole extent of it, was in those days to prevail.
 Nor this only. But, from what we find added here,
 we are empowered further to say, that this remark-
 able dispensation of *universal* tranquility, within
 the Empire, was vouchsafed with this *intent*, that
 God's *Angels* or Ministers (*αγγελοι*) and particularly
one of them ascending from the East, and to whose
 peculiar care *the seal of the living God** was now
 entrusted, might have leisure and opportunity,
 therewith to *seal* or mark *the servants of God in their*
foreheads†; that is, to furnish them with every
mean, in the right *use* of which, under the power-
 ful and favourable *influences* of Heaven, they should
 be enabled to acquire every *grace*, needful to make
 up, and every visible *mark* proper to entitle them
 to, the glorious, *deepwrought*, and indelible *charac-*
ter of true worshippers of God, and *genuine* profes-
 sors of the Christian Faith; not more to the orna-
 ment of Religion, than, as we are taught to add
 (ix. 4.) to the *certain* security of their own persons,
 in

* This seal is a seal of office, Genes. xli. 42. Esther viii. 2.
 1. Maccab. vi. 14, 15. Joseph. xii. 14. xx. 2. It is proper to
 add, that Baptism was anciently called a seal. Grabe Spicil.
 Patr. p. 1. not. ad Act. Teclæ, p. 332.

† This mark in the forehead is thought to be an allusion to
 Ezek. xi. 4. and the learned Grotius very appositely observes
 not only that from the first, Christians used to sign themselves
 with the sign of the Cross; but that, in the east, servants used to
 have the names of their masters written in their foreheads.

in the ensuing scenes of woe and afflictive trouble. In plain language, now it was God intended, a *true Church* (a body of men, that should make it their *earnest* study to *worship* and obey *him in spirit and in truth*) should be *settled* within the Empire and *unmoveably* fixt there, by the instrumentality of *many*, (who through the severe persecutions or imminent dangers they had been exposed to, should be found *divinely* fitted for this momentous, and one may say *Angelic* Ministry) but particularly of *one*, who at this time should, in the *East*, *ascend*, rise to that unexpected pitch of *power*, as should enable him effectually to *repress* every baneful *interruption*, and as effectually to accomplish the *share* assigned him in this important task of the times.—And what could any one be inclined to expect would be the *effect* of all these providential preparatives? Scarce what we are told: scarce an effect of measure so scanty, as for 144,000 only to be *sealed*; for that small number only to have improved, in a proper manner, the blessed opportunities offered them, to become and be accounted worthy members of the *true Israel*, the peculiar people of God *. And yet the number, it is certain from the Prophecy, amounted not to more. More undoubtedly there were, within the very extensive domains of the Empire, that *pretended* to the dignity of the *sealed* tribe; more that claimed to pass as belonging to it, because of their compliance with, and seeming attachment and zeal for the stated forms of Religion. But it seems *all were not Israel, that were of Israel*: and as we read in this book (ii. 9.) there were *those, that said they were Jews, and were not, but were the Synagogue of Satan*. The *sealed* tribe then, the *genuine* worshippers of God, the *proper*

A. D.
334.Seal V
Rev. vi
1—8.

N. 2

dis-

* That the children of Israel, in this Prophecy, cannot possibly be understood of the Jews, but must be applied to Christians, is clearly demonstrated by the learned Vitringa in loc.

A. D. 334. disciples of the meek and holy Jesus, who alone
 Seal VI. *a little flock*, a body insignificant in propor-
 Rev. vii. tion to those that had *the form of godliness*. Nor
 1—8. do we find matters were to mend in succeeding
 ages; not at least, till after the judgments of the
 six trumpets, and the intolerable encroachments of
 the beast, (xiv. 1.) should, by rousing the attention
 of the thoughtful, contribute to swell the sum and
 muster-roll of God's *genuine* servants. Till that dis-
 tinguishing period, the *Christian* Church might en-
 large it's borders; but the *true* Church of God
 should not increase in multitude. And well indeed,
 might we have said, it was, that it's numbers were
 not lessened, through the established superstition,
 idolatry, and wickedness of those times, had we
 not been taught to believe, the wisdom, holiness,
 veracity and power of the Almighty engaged, to
 prevent the reduction of his *peculiar* people, to a
 measure of weakness and obscurity, that should
 render them in a manner below notice and next to
 extinction. But it is time to see, how far History
 agrees with the events here predicted.

In the year 325 Licinius, the last of the Heathen
 Emperors, as was observed above, was dispatched
 in reward of his treachery: and from that time to
 the year 335 one may affirm, an *outward* undisturb-
 ed *tranquility* to have prevailed throughout the whole
 Empire. Constantine procured it effectually to the
 Church by convoking, in the year 324, and holding
 in the year 325, which was the very year of his
Monarchy, the celebrated Council of Nice; from
 whose decrees he never would, whilst he lived,
 suffer the least deviation, though ready to receive
 to favour, and restore those who at first had differ-
 ed from it, when offering to submit. It must be
 confessed, that there were some *secret* practices car-
 ried on in different ways, which, under other cir-
 cum-

cumstances, such as afterwards took place, might undoubtedly have had very fatal consequences. But Constantine by entreaties or threats, employed as occasion served, managed affairs so dextrously within the interval mentioned, that at last no one of the *trees of the earth* was injured*, tho' the *winds* were ready to break *loose* upon them. Nor was the *quiet* of the *state* less conspicuous during the *ten* years we assigned to this period. Not one *competitor* appeared, even in the most distant Provinces; whilst the several *nations* bordering on the Empire, so far from proposing or attempting to disquiet it, were very careful, from the very beginning of Constantine's Monarchy, to send their several Embassadors, with large presents, to induce the Emperor to renew the treaties subsisting between them†. There was indeed, in the year 332, a Gothic war‡: but Constantine was not engaged in it on his own account; nor had the Goths attacked the Empire. The dispute lay between them and the Poles; the latter of whom the Emperor assisted as an ally, and supported so effectually, that the Goths were drove beyond the Iſther, forced henceforward to pay the Romans a yearly tribute, instead of one they had received from them, ever since the days of the Emperor Probus§. It is then a fact, that neither *Earth*, nor *Sea*; neither *Church*, nor *State* were at this time *openly* disturbed; tho' from what followed, immediately after the period we here fix upon, (the very year 335, when the Council of Tyre was held) it is abundantly evident there were not dispositions wanting in those, who heretofore had

A. D.

334.

Seal VI.

Rev. vii.

1—8.

* If any should object Eusebius's expulsion, in the year 328, they may see reasons in Tillemont, for fixing that event to the year 325 and as to Eustachius exile, the date of it is by many, settled to the year 340. See Maimburg. Hist. of Arianism.

† Euseb. vit. Const. iv. 7.

‡ Pagh. ad. A. 330. v. 8. and A. 332. v. 3.

§ Euseb. vit. Const. iv. 5. ibiq. Vales.

A. D. 334. had been very injurious, to have thrown both into great convulsions. But, as noted above, Constantine's unvaried attachment to, and strenuous support of the Nicene Council, happily beat down every dangerous ebullition in respect to the *Church*; whilst in respect to the *state*, just as the Prophecy foretells, the Emperor's appointment of *four angels*, or Ministers, *four Prætorian Prefects*, Vicars, or Viceroy's, under his *own* supreme command, and that of his *three* sons, in the *four* different *quarters* of the Empire, as effectually prevented all *domestic* or *foreign* commotions *. Indeed nothing is plainer from the Historians of these times, than that Constantine did in every regulation of his, endeavour most zealously to keep the Empire free from every kind of disquiet: and tho' it is not always easy to assign the motives that influence Princes in their conduct, and it is very wickedly hinted by Zosimus, that Constantine, whom he is ever severe upon, sought for this repose, in order to enjoy the pleasure of a voluptuous life, to which, he says, he was addicted; yet have we it in our power to assert, upon better and the fullest authority, that the Emperor's great and steady aim in these transactions was, that he might have leisure, especially in the *East*, where it most was wanting, to *seal the servants of the living God in their foreheads* †, by furnishing his subjects, in those parts especially, with every needful opportunity and means to bring them over to the acknowledgment of the truth, or to confirm them in the sound, steady, and unanimous profession of it. To this purpose he did many things

* See above note (†) p. 92.

† The reader will see this character of Constantine's very clearly set forth in Euseb. de vit. Const. ii. 2, 19, 28, 42, 65. and it is remarkable, that in one place (iii. 10.) where he describes the Emperor's entry into the room, where the Nicene Fathers were met, he tells us, he appeared as a *Celestial Angel of God*.

things, that can admit of no other construction, than what we are here pleading for. He vouchsafed both to Jews and Gentiles many immunities and many largeſſes, in common with thoſe the Chriſtians enjoy'd, ſo to ſoften their averſions, and render them better diſpoſed towards the New System. He deprived neither of any *rational* liberty, but only reſtrained it where it appeared inconfiſtent with juſtice or virtue; as in forbidding the Jews to force circumciſion on their Chriſtian ſlaves, and the Gentiles to practice their ſecret or wicked myſteries. He did not order the idols to be deſtroyed at once, but to be brought forth out of their receſſes, and to be ſtrippt of their outſide tinsel, in the ſight of all the people, that they ſeeing the deſpicable remains of theſe *lying vanities*, and the ſhameful impoſitions, their prieſts had preſumed to paſs upon them for realities, they might contract a juſt contempt for Idolatry and the foundations of it. Where ſuch a rational diſdain led the way to a thorough converſion, every kind of favour and immunity immediately followed, and the virtue was ſure to be duly acknowledged and plentifully rewarded, as appears from the inſtances of Conſtantia and Conſtantina, mentioned in the former article. After this, churches were, by the Emperor's directions, built every where (as alſo noted above) and the Magiſtracy expreſſly enjoined to aſſiſt the undertakers with every thing needful; that ſo, in time, the ignorant and unbelieving might, by proper inſtruction and a pure worſhip in thoſe places, (for both which Conſtantine alſo carefully provided) have an opportunity of acquiring or improving all neceſſary knowledge and every deſirable virtue. The Emperor took, beſides, peculiar care to enjoin the obſervance of the *Lord's day* throughout his dominions; and then effectually to guard againſt his army's being infected by the bad example of his

A. D.

334.

Seal VI.

Rev. vii.

1—8.

A. D. 334. his Heathen soldiers, and gradually to effect a change in this unbelieving part of his subjects, he drew up *himself*, for the *daily* use of all of them, an excellent *form* of prayer; which, at the same time that it roused none of their inveterate prejudices, was thoroughly well adapted to instil into their minds a just sense of the supremacy of God and their own continual dependance upon the favour of Heaven. In fine, not to be unnecessarily prolix, so zealous was Constantine for the full establishment of Christianity, and the conversion of all nations to the profession of it, that he failed not to improve every favourable opportunity of gaining these ends, even out of his own dominions; as his incomparable letter to the king of Persia, and his transactions with the Armenians, Ethiopians and others prove beyond the possibility of a doubt.—Notwithstanding all this, though great and indefatigable were the pains Constantine took, for the settlement and support of true Religion; and it is certain, that millions were by his prudent and gentle endeavours brought over to the profession of Christianity: Yet, to our great concern, do we find, just as the Prophecy foretells, that however *many were called, few were chosen*; few proved to be of those, of whom it could be said, that they had the distinguishing *mark* of the true *servants of the living God* impressed on their foreheads in just and evident characters. One might have placed in this class of *almost* Christians, all those who now began to load the *simplicity* of the Gospel with great *pomp* of rituals, and some advances to *spiritual* tyranny. One might have added to these *nominals* those others, who because of their attachment to the *superstitious* practices, and the *will-worship*, that were at this time creeping into the Christian Church, may well seem to have leaned in no small degree to a defection from the *one* mediator, and the re-
fined

fined purity of his Religion. It fine, it could not
 have been accounted severe to have maintained,
 that a *true* Christian temper could not possibly
 actuate those, who rather than sacrifice their pri-
 vate *opinions* and desire of conquest, to the present
 quiet and lasting benefit of the Church, (now
 wanting teachers not disputers) were mis-using all
 their abilities to purposes directly opposite hereto,
 and laying deep the seeds, of what quickly after
 grew up into the most monstrous and destructive
 uncharitableness. But, not to rest the matter
 wholly on these instances, in which different sen-
 timents may lead to different conclusions, it is
 thought more eligible in the case, directly to ap-
 peal to the express testimony of Eusebius*, con-
 firmed by others and setting forth, *that besides the*
insatiable covetousness and intolerable rapacity of the
Emperor's favourites (of the established Religion
 no doubt) *numbers by fraudulent dissimulation crept*
into the Church; whose affected piety (tho' it was able
to impose upon Constantine's unsuspicious and benevolent
temper) yet evidently appeared to be no better than a
name, and hypocrisy all.—Such was the state of the
 Church *militant* at this time: whilst of the ages
 that had gone before, when Christians were mostly
 in great tribulation, we have reason to think in a
 very different manner; since St. John tells us, in
 the close of this vision (vii. 9—17.) that of the
 professors of those days he saw in *triumphant festi-*
vity a great multitude, which no man could number, of
all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.
 But, in regard to this Celestial Choir, our present
 design will scarce permit us to say more, than that it
 affords us this, not unseasonable, Aphorism: that Ad-
 versity is the sure preservative of Religion; the ap-
 pointed Physic of the soul in it's moral dispositions.†

O

And

* Euseb. vit. Const. iv. 54. ibiq; Vales.

† It may not be amiss to note here, that the two Epistles to
 the

A. D.

334

Seal VI.

Rev. vii.

1—8.

And now, it should seem pretty clear, that without indulging any conjectural fancies, and without putting the least force upon the words and most natural sense of the Prophecies hitherto considered, these Prophecies may be shewn to yield a very intelligible account of the several events, which, by incontestible authority, may be proved to have happened, in just order of time and close connexion, since the days of St. John to the year of our Lord 335.—What is to follow, in another performance, to make the next Class of Prophecies equally intelligible, the Author begs leave to say, he hopes will, upon perusal, be found attended with equal plainness and evidence, and destitute in no respect of proper proof to evince, that these latter predictions carry us down, by as easy steps, and in full as just connexion, to the year 842, the memorable Æra of the final establishment of Idolatry in the Christian Church.—As to what concerns the Vial Prophecies, the last that have respect to the distracted state of Religion; if of these the *five* first seem very clearly to have had their *accomplishments*, and jointly, tho' *successively* to extend to the year 1648 (when, by the treaty of Westphalia, now one of the fundamental Laws of the Empire, the Protestant Religion was happily settled within all it's limits) then must it be granted, that from this period to our days (supposing the preceding arrangements unexceptionable) the *Sixth Vial Prophecy* must of course have been

the Churches of Ephesus and Smyrna, which we meet with in the 2d. Chapter of this book, relate to the Class of Prophecies, we have been here considering; those to Pergamos and Thyatira, to the next Class: and those to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea to the last. If the Reader should be desirous of knowing something of these Epistles, perhaps he may find some slender satisfaction, in a Fast Sermon published last year, under the title of *Protestants characterized by our Lord, and forewarned of their danger.*

been fulfilling; and that, according to the contents of the prediction, *by a gradual reduction of some one power, which all along had proved itself, by uncontested effects, the one unfordable Euphrates; the one unconquerable Obstacle to the further progress of those Princes of the East, whom the States, rid by the beasts or under Papal dominion, had been heretofore afflicted by, and still continued to stand in just fear of.* Whether the Reader can find these characters in the *Apostolic* house of Austria, and may be inclined to admit, that ever since the Peace of Westphalia this mighty Euphrates has *indeed* been gradually drying up, this the Author cannot pretend to determine: but thus much he will presume to say, with all proper deference to better Judgment, that when, in the further course of his enquiry, it shall be incumbent on him to attempt to execute this part of his task, he hopes he shall be able to produce (besides the *Apostolic* bull of the present Pope, just opportunely issued, and greatly to our purpose) sundry evidences, that seem incontestably to make out both these points. And then, if the Reader will be pleased to take in the Prophecy of the *barvest*, (xiv. 14—17.) which undoubtedly is parallel to the *Sixth Vial*, because that of the bloody vintage, which follows it (xiv. 17—20.) answers every way to the Seventh Vial; it is not improbable, but he will be disposed to believe, from the present circumstances of the times, and the low condition the house of Austria is actually in, that, for all the certain assistances of the See of Rome and it's adherents, that house is in likelihood ripe for, and near it's ruin; so as that all it's powers, resources, and alliances, may truly be considered, as in the ready way of being soon reaped, carried off, and laid up, for very different and better uses: whilst from the Heroic achievements, and unequalled character of the great Monarch

narch of Prussia, it cannot be found difficult, further to persuade ourselves, that this magnanimous Prince, our modern Constantine, is, in the very highest degree of probability, another angel, entrusted with *the Seal of the living God*; the chosen, *the commissioned reaper of the appointed harvest*; the very man, or *son of man, seated on the cloud*, (sure emblem of rapidity and a celestial covering) *with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.*

But enough has been said to put the Reader in the high road to conviction, in respect to the *intelligibleness* and close *connexion* of all St. John's Prophecies; and enough, for the present, to understand, what is now or at no very great distance of time likely to be brought about in these *Western Regions* of the world. Nothing more, therefore, shall be added here, than the Author's earnest request, that what has been advanced in this Essay, may be read with candour; and that the reprehensible parts of the performance, (such as some perhaps may appear, to keener judgments) may be carefully separated from the subject itself, that so the blame, if merited, may light where it should, and the sacredness of our Evangelical records be preserved unviolated.

F I N I S.